CATS Pitfichie Hill Bike Trails and Car Park

Gravitate Northeast's Response to Representations

This document contains Gravitate Northeast's responses to representations for the proposed Community Asset Transfer at Pitfichie Hill. Not all representations received an individual response. The representations published by Forestry and Land Scotland at Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland are numbered 1-113. The reference shown at the top of each response below corresponds to the relevant representation number.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 005

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

We believe that we can improve the biodiversity of the forest through work in the Biodiversity Corridors and the wider area. The trails and riders will be confined to small area, only 0.5% of the Pitfichie Hill area. However, the biodiversity corridors (8%) will break up the commercial pine monoculture benefiting insects, birds and therefore mammals. Gravitate North East has been granted funds to further develop a Biodiversity plan by the Neighbour Ecosystem Fund.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0110

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

On events, some event organisers are new to the area and do not have the resources to properly manage events. Gravitate North East members know the area and what is required for a well run event. We will have signage, marshal, stewards and planning that means any event is well managed. We will also require events to have Public Entertainment Licence where this is relevant, so that there is proper consultation and independent oversight.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0120

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

The trails and car park will be hidden in the pine forest and by the fall of the land. The area, currently clear felled, will be replanted with Douglas Fir, which will reach a height of 3m in 5 years. Even within the current clear felled areas pioneer species, such as birch, would hide the trails from view.

Our members enjoy all sorts of outdoor activities from running to horse riding, not just cycling. We recognise that Pitfichie Hill is for all to enjoy, and we are making this proposal to tidy up what is already a popular mountain biking venue without proper facilities and management. The expected number of riders, (12 on winter weekday to 60 on a summer weekend) will be spread out across the trails. The car park and toilets will always be open allowing better access for the public. Our experience from other venues is that they are quiet, peaceful places with access for all.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

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Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0130

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. These numbers were confirmed by evidence provided in Representation 800 provided by the Friends of Pitfichie Group. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

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Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0140

Dear Respondent,

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

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Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0150

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

First of all, I'm sorry that you have not seen the changes in our proposal following feedback from others. We have been working for more than a year with FLS, the Estate, professionals, planners and with the feedback from Community Council Meetings and our own information days. We would have liked to make it more collaborative, but that was derailed very early on by others.

Hopefully I can answer your questions here.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

The trails are constructed using material along the trail; there is no imported material, the existing ground is reshaped. The car park may require some imported material. There will only be one or two diggers to site, for around 4 months, depending on the weather conditions. The construction methodology also caters for protection of amphibians.

Sculpted forest margins, by managing the height of predominantly commercial firs, is beneficial to wildlife. It provides a variety of habitats rather than blanket monoculture.We believe that we can improve the biodiversity of the forest through

work in the Biodiversity Corridors and the wider area. The trails and riders will be confined to small area, only 0.5% of the Pitfichie Hill area. However, the biodiversity corridors (8%) will break up the commercial pine monoculture benefiting insects, birds and therefore mammals. Gravitate North East have been granted funds to further develop a Biodiversity plan by the Neighbour Ecosystem Fund. The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However, it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

There will be no electric supply to the site. The payment machines and CCTV will be solar powered.

The car park design meets the regulatory requirements for drainage and flood water.

There may be events, biking or otherwise, organised using the car park as they are now. Some event organisers are new to the area and do not have the resources to properly manage events. Gravitate North East members know the area and what is required for a well run event. We will have signage, marshal, stewards and planning that means any event is well managed. We will also require events to have Public Entertainment Licence where this is relevant, so that there is proper consultation and independent oversight.

Gravitate North East volunteers will be onsite most days to ensure that the operation plan is working; the site is litter free, clean and address issues quickly. This is an improvement on the current site management.

From what we see at other popular locations, for most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0170

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

You may not realise that Pitfichie Hill is already a well established mountain biking venue, and there have been trails and race events there for decades. These have not impacted the village life, in fact many residents have moved there because they are keen mountain bikers. They are often in the Grant Arms enjoying a scone with you! The issue is that there are no facilities like those at the venues you mention.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0180

Dear Respondent,

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0210

Dear Respondent,

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

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On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0230

Dear Respondent,

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

On your point of viability, Forestry and Land Scotland will undertake a review of the financial sustainability of the project in the next stage of the CATS process. At this point, Gravitate North East believes that the fixed annual payment covers the cost of land lost to forestry. We will continue to work with experts and FLS on an operating and economic model for the shuttle.

The economic benefits are at three different levels. Firstly, from visitors' day to day expenditure. Secondly, and most importantly, from investment in the site for local contractors and professionals (e.g. contractors salaries) and ongoing costs (e.g. drivers and cleaners wages) and lastly by increasing the appeal of the area and so generating new businesses, maintaining school rolls and house prices.

We believe that we can improve the biodiversity of the forest through work in the Biodiversity Corridors and the wider area. The trails and riders will be confined to a small area, only 0.5% of the Pitfichie Hill area. However, the biodiversity corridors (8%) will break up the commercial pine monoculture benefiting insects, birds and therefore mammals. Gravitate North East has been granted funds to further develop a Biodiversity Plan by the Neighbour Ecosystem Fund.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

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On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0240

Dear Respondent,

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users.

Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year. You are correct that this small number of riders will be using the shuttle, but on the other hand there will not be the massive expansion of visitors that you are worried about.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0280

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

We believe that we can improve the biodiversity of the forest through work in the Biodiversity Corridors and the wider area. The trails and riders will be confined to small area, only 0.5% of the Pitfichie Hill area. However, the biodiversity corridors (8%) will break up the commercial pine monoculture benefiting insects, birds and therefore mammals. Gravitate North East have been granted funds to further develop a Biodiversity plan by the Neighbour Ecosystem Fund.

Gravitate North East volunteers will be onsite most days to ensure that the operation plan is working; the site is litter free, clean and addresses issues quickly. This is an improvement on the current site management.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0310

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

On your particular point, our proposal will segregate riders from other users. Our members enjoy all sorts of outdoor activities from running to horse riding, not just cycling. We recognise that Pitfichie Hill is for all to enjoy, and we are making this proposal to tidy up what is already a popular mountain biking venue without proper facilities and management. The expected number of riders, (12 on winter weekday to 60 on a summer weekend) will be spread out across the trails. The car park and toilets will always be open allowing better access for the public. Our experience from other venues is that they are quiet, peaceful places with access for all.

Gravitate North East volunteers will be onsite most days to ensure that the operation plan is working; the site is litter free, clean and addresses issues quickly. This is an improvement on the current site management.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0320

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

On your particular point, our proposal will segregate riders from other users. Our members enjoy all sorts of outdoor activities from running to horse riding, not just cycling. We recognise that Pitfichie Hill is for all to enjoy, and we are making this proposal to tidy up what is already a popular mountain biking venue without proper facilities and management. The expected number of riders, (12 on winter weekday to 60 on a summer weekend) will be spread out across the trails. The car park and toilets will always be open allowing better access for the public. Our experience from other venues is that they are quiet, peaceful places with access for all.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0330

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

The economic benefits are at three different levels. Firstly, from visitors' day to day expenditure in the area. Secondly, and most significantly, from investment in the site for local contractors and professionals (e.g. contractors salaries) and ongoing costs (e.g. drivers and cleaners wages) and lastly by increasing the appeal of the area and so generating new businesses, maintaining school rolls and house prices.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0370

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.
Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0380

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

On your particular query, the proposal is not to lock the car park at night. Access past the car park on the forest road will be gated when the shuttle is not running.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0390

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

On your particular points

- There have been regional and national events held at Pitifichie for decades. In the past, for example the Scottish Enduro Series used the Village Hall for sign on. There have already been 4 events this year. Some event organisers are new to the area and do not have the resources to properly manage events. Gravitate North East members know the area and what is required for a well run event. We will have signage, marshal, stewards and planning that means any event is well managed. We will also require events to have Public Entertainment Licence where this is relevant, so that there is proper consultation and independent oversight
- We have a number of very talented riders, often younger people, that find their way to the outdoors and competitive sport through mountain biking. They do not have facilities locally to progress, and this results in them competing at a disadvantage or travelling down to the central belt to train.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0400

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

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The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0410

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

On the particular points that we haven't answered so far

- We hope to use electric vehicles but we can not commit to these at this time. We will continue to develop our business proposal with FLS including sourcing and running electric vehicles.
- Gravitate North East volunteers will be onsite most days to ensure that the operation plan is working; the site is litter free, clean and address issues quickly. This is an improvement on the current site management.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0420

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

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Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0430

Dear Respondent,

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal. On a particular point you make about toilets. We have had feedback that toilets are something that are required on site.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

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On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0440

Dear Respondent,

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

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Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0470

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

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Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0480

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

On your particular point about longer term viability. Forestry and Land Scotland will undertake a review of the financial sustainability of the project in the next stage of the CATS process. This will also include the decommissioning provision that they think is appropriate. At this point, Gravitate North East believes that the fixed annual payment covers the cost of land lost to forestry. We will continue to work with experts and FLS on an operating and economic model for the shuttle.

And environmental impact, we believe that we can improve the biodiversity of the forest through work in the Biodiversity Corridors and the wider area. The trails and riders will be confined to a small area, only 0.5% of the Pitfichie Hill area. However, the biodiversity corridors (8%) will break up the commercial pine monoculture benefiting insects, birds and therefore mammals. Gravitate North East has been granted funds to further develop a Biodiversity plan by the Neighbour Ecosystem Fund. We hope that this will be a model for better forest management for other user groups and FLS.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0500

Dear Respondent,

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

On your particular point about Tarland. Tarland is a very different venue. Pitfichie is a well established race venue that has had active mountain biking since the 1990s. Mountain biking will continue to grow unmanaged at Pitfichie, without controls and accountability, if this proposal does not go ahead.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0580

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Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

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Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0680

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

On the specific points you have raised

- We have made provision to upgrade and maintain the forest road to the top of Pitifichie Hill. You may also be interested to know that it is currently mountain bikers through the Aberdeenshire Trail Association that cut back the gorse to maintain access on this path.
- We believe that we can improve the biodiversity of the forest through work in the Biodiversity Corridors and the wider area. The trails and riders will be confined to a small area, only 0.5% of the Pitfichie Hill area. However, the biodiversity corridors (8%) will break up the commercial pine monoculture benefiting insects, birds and therefore mammals. Gravitate North East has been granted funds to further develop a Biodiversity plan by the Neighbour Ecosystem Fund. We hope that this will be a model for improving other commercial forests in Scotland.

- The trail design is based on proper drainage and preventing erosion. This is essential not only to protect the environment and water supplies, but also to protect the trail and minimise maintenance costs. The trail construction methodology, inspection and maintenance protect the trails and consequently they have no impact on water supplies. Our proposal will be reviewed by SEPA and the Planning Authority.

- The economic benefits are at three different levels. Firstly, from visitors' day to day expenditure. Secondly, from investment in the site for local contractors and professionals (e.g. contractors salaries) and ongoing costs (e.g. drivers and cleaners wages) and lastly by increasing the appeal of the area and so generating new businesses, maintaining school rolls and house prices.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this

proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0690

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 070

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

On littering, Gravitate North East volunteers will be onsite most days to ensure that the operation plan is working; the site is litter free, clean and address issues quickly. This is an improvement on the current site management.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0710

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

On the other specific points you raise

- The economic benefits are at three different levels, not just from visitor driven businesses. Firstly, from visitors' day to day expenditure e.g. filling with Petrol. Secondly, from investment in the site for local contractors and professionals (e.g. contractors salaries) and ongoing costs (e.g. drivers and cleaners wages) and lastly by increasing the appeal of the area and so generating new businesses, maintaining school rolls and house prices.
- Unsanctioned parking as a result of charging has not been observed at other rural car parks that charge for parking. It's more likely that cars that currently park in parking spaces and verges will use the dedicated car park. We hope that users of the forest will see the benefit of the car park and toilets and improved management of the site and would donate to their upkeep.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0720

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0730

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0740

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. On the particular issues you have raised there is no impact on groundwater or drinking water supplies.

- The trail design is based on proper drainage and preventing erosion. This is essential not only to protect the environment and water supplies, but also to protect the trail and minimise maintenance costs.
- The trail construction methodology, inspection and maintenance protect the trails and consequently they have no impact on water supplies. The machines work close to the surface, it is more likely that felling and regrowth, crop rotation will impact ground water.
- The Protected Drinking Water Areas to the south of the proposal has two roads, and an extent of forestry and agricultural land within it.
- Our plans have to be approved by SEPA, the regulatory body.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 075

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

I should make it explicit that the car park is available to everyone. I understand from our members who are horse riders and use Pitfichie frequently that parking and turning for horse boxes is difficult currently. They do ride at Pitfichie, and would do if our development goes ahead. A dedicated car park would surely improve the situation.

We recognise that Pitfichie Hill is for all to enjoy, and we are making this proposal to tidy up what is already a popular mountain biking venue without proper facilities and management. The expected number of riders, (12 on winter weekday to 60 on a summer weekend) will be spread out across the trails. The car park and toilets will always be open allowing better access for the public. Our experience from other venues is that they are quiet, peaceful places with access for all.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0760

Dear Colin,

I realise that it is not possible to change your mind, but for completeness I have provided a response and addressed the issues you have raised.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

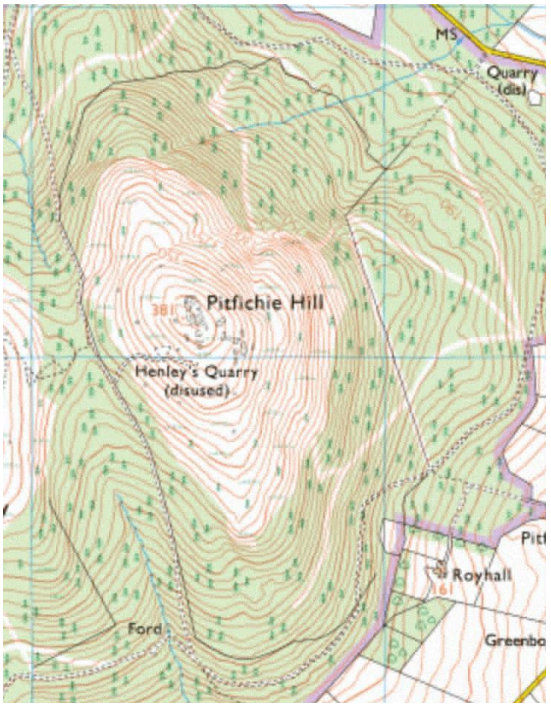
Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side,

this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However, it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. On the specific points that you have raised

- Unstanctioned parking has not been observed at other rural car parks that charge for parking. It's more likely that cars that currently park in parking spaces and verges will use the dedicated car park. We hope that users of the forest will see the benefit of the car park and toilets and improved management of the site and would donate to their upkeep.
- Forestry and Land Scotland will undertake a review of the financial sustainability of the project in the next stage of the CATS process. At this point, Gravitate North East believes that the fixed annual payment covers the cost of land lost to forestry. We will continue to work with experts and FLS on an operating and economic model for the shuttle.
- The planning application maps are based on OS maps and show the forest roads in full. The route for the uplift is shown as a road on the 1:25000 scale map (as below).



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For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0770

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. And we will continue to improve our proposal.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0780

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. On the particular points you have raised but are not answered already

- We will not infringe any SOAC rights obviously that would be illegal.
- Exactly as you say, unmanaged trail development is not what we want. We believe that a mountain biking group, like Gravitate North East, caring for the facilities and providing proper trails will meet the demand for unsanctioned trails.
- Our members enjoy all sorts of outdoor activities from running to horse riding, not just cycling. We recognise that Pitfichie Hill is for all to enjoy, and we are making this proposal to tidy up what is already a popular mountain biking venue without proper facilities and management. The expected number of riders, (12 on winter weekday to 60 on a summer weekend) will be spread out across the trails. The car park and toilets will always be open allowing better access for the public. Our experience from other venues is that they are quiet, peaceful places with access for all.
- Page 7 of the FLS Land Management Plan 2017 references working with NETCO (now Gravitate North East) and other bodies. The goal to improve mountain biking facilities was also included in the 2006 plan.
- Aberdeenshire Trail Association and Gravitate North East are maintaining trails on Pitifichie Hill and elsewhere.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0800

Dear David,

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members, some of whom live in the village, believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. This corresponds to the levels of traffic noted in your representation. We also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. It is simply not true that there is no physical benefit from Downhill Mountain Biking. It is a highly anaerobic exercise demanding strength and skill.

The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, or maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast

majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However, it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect, and in fact promote, wildlife will be followed. And we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. I have included our response to your specific points in the list below.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no impact, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Response to Representation 26-27-01 LEAS ATR 0800 FoP

1.1 All mountain biking requires physical exertion. Downhill mountain bikers have to be physically fit, strong and agile to ride these trails. This is why mountain biking is beneficial to small rural communities; it provides an outlet for people, in outdoors, that is challenging, exciting and part of youth culture. We want to see more biking and less scrolling.

1.2 The areas have different definitions, for example planning development area, an outline around the perimeter, is different from area than the CATS lease area which is limited to the area of the infrastructure. 1.3. The exact boundary, within these limits, will be finalised in the lease agreement.

1.3 This is incorrect. There is no right for trail building in the Biodiversity Corridor.

1.4 This is correct. The map indicates the area of the Development Area. Map 2. Shows the road marked on the OS map to Bealach.

1.5 The uplift route runs from the car park location along the forest road south, above Roy Hall, then turns right, up the hill to the Bealach. The route has been supplied to planners.

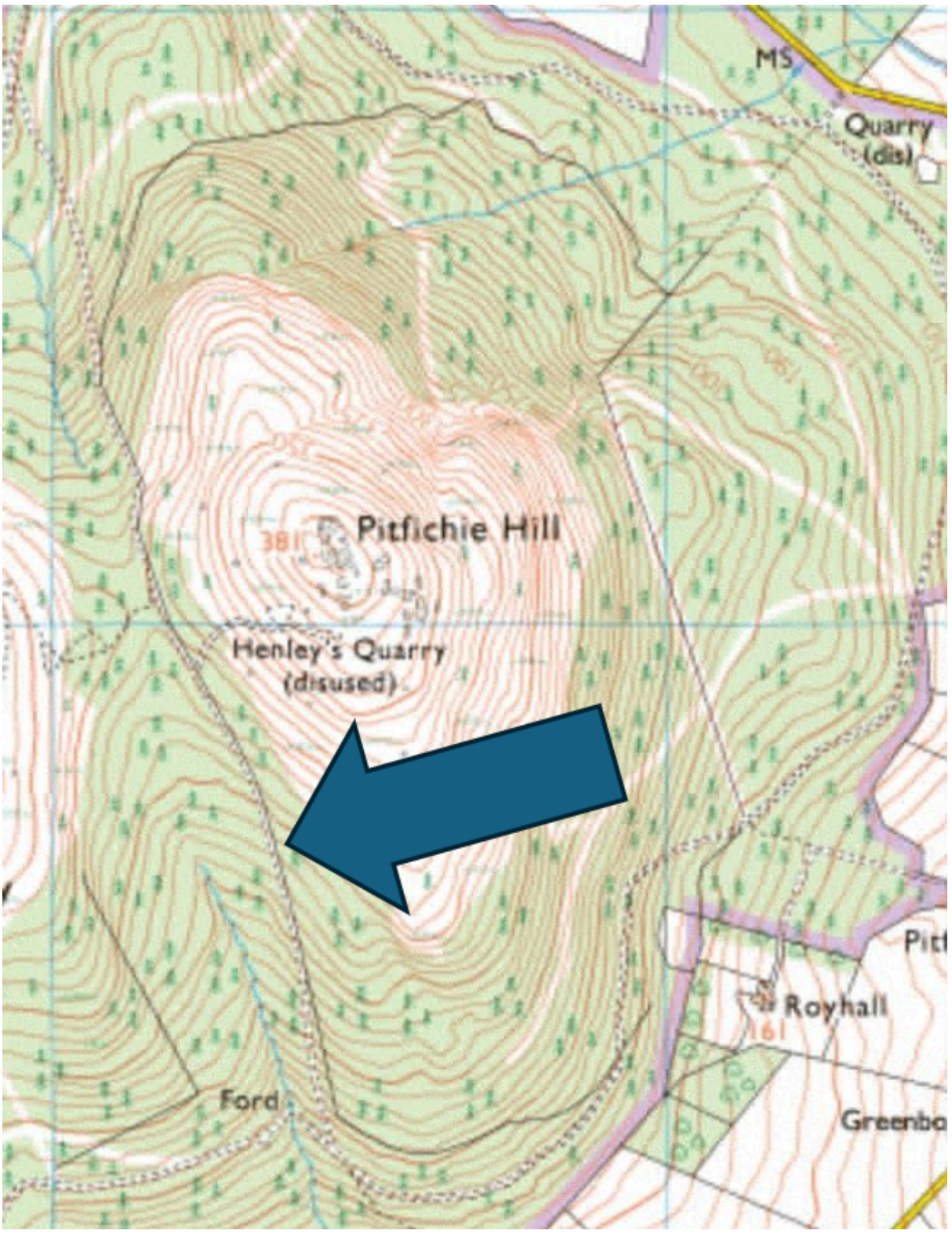
1.6. The precise location is marked on Map 1 and Map 7 in this representation. It is the mountain bike trail shown in red, and again on Map 7. The path is approximately 2m wide, partly machine built, and used by thousands of people since it was created in 2022. This is a picture of it, and with cyclists on it.





1.7 The lower climb trail will not be used by the uplift. It is wider to allow vehicle access in case of emergency.

1.8. Map 4. This is incorrect; the route is marked on OS map 1:25000 (as below), with a wall and walled drainage ditch on its north side. The definitive OS basemap, required by the planning authority is used in Map 2 and 3 in this representation. This shows the road from the car park to the Bealach.



We note the OS base map in Map 4, is different from the OS base Map in Map 1, and the 1:50,000 scale OS Map.

1.8 Gravtiate North East has made provision in its project budget to add drainage and maintain the road to the Bealach.

1.9 The proposal provides proper parking at the entrance to the forest, removing unauthorised driving along the forest track that happens now. Gravtiate North East will seek to use electric vehicles but can not commit to this at this stage.

1.11 As can be seen from maps in this document (and shared with the community council). The new route will utilise an existing informal, well established mountain bike trail for 200m, then meanders up the hill for 250m, re-joining the current path and access to the start of DH1. This will be 1.5m wide and 600m long in total. The section of the current trail that is bypassed (250m) will be closed and overgrow, so there is little or no net increase.

1.12/Map.6 Map 6 is taken from the Preliminary Environmental Survey in February 2025.The area to the east was included to cover an alternative design during the later design phase. It is not included in the CATS lease area.

1.15/1.16 Section 4.4 refers to the trails in the proposal that will reduce demand for unsanctioned trails in the area. Formalisation of the facilities promotes responsible access. Objecting to this proposal will not prevent unsanctioned trails, only promote it.

1.17 The proposal addresses the high-level of mountain biking already at Pitfichie. Its scale is appropriate to that activity.

2.1.1 There is a need for better management of mountain biking of these tails given the level of complaints from some residents over the last year and this representation.

2.1.2 Downhill mountain biking is a minority sport, but important to many in Aberdeenshire. The scale and impact of the proposal, a forest car park, is in keeping with that level of demand.

2.1.4 It is generally accepted that all activity outdoors, engagement in sport and clubs is beneficial to health.

2.1.6 The uplift vehicles will replace the private vehicles using the 2km stretch of forest road.

2.1.7 see answer 1.9.

2.1.8 The site will remain a tranquil environment. The levels of traffic expected are within variation in the background levels. Experience at other venues is that the riders and users are spread out over the range of trails, and may not even see each other. What will improve is the management of the site which is already used by thousands of visitors a year.

2.2 The financial benefits are at three different levels 1. from visitors day to day expenditure e.g.lunch at the COOP in Kemnay, or filling with Petrol 2. primary investment in the site for local contractors and professionals (e.g. trail builders salaries) and ongoing costs (e.g. drivers and cleaners wages) 3. increasing the appeal of the area and so generate new businesses, maintaining school rolls and house prices.

2.4. The proposal improves on the current state for all users. The design and operations plan ensures safe access for all. We agree that the forest should not be controlled by one group.

4.1.3. The Biodiversity Plan will be supported by a Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan that is developed by professional ecologists.

4.1.6 The spectator area refers primarily to the riders paddock finish area, but also includes the start and mid-station of the DH1 and DH2 trails. There are no permanent benches or similar facilities at these locations.

4.1.9 FoP should also acknowledge that the current Gravitate North East Membership and supporters includes coaches, trail groups and community groups that have already hosted groups at Pitfichie, and more will be enabled by toilets on the site.

4.2.1 This is in correct. Gravitate North East members answered many questions while at the information day. The walls were covered with information relevant to the issues raised by the community and there were design options for attendees to comment on. Some attendees felt intimidated by a protest meeting organised by Friends of Pitfichie in the adjacent room, and felt that the objectors from FOP prevented them contributing to the information day. Gravitate North East recognised that some people had not been able to access the information because of this, and arrange a further meeting, but again the same attendees disrupted that meeting.

4.2.3 Gravitate North East have used limited social media through the year because our focus has been on the local community residents. That is why we have used the closed Facebook group "Whats on Monymusk". The appendix survey analysis implies that the survey went to all Gravitate Noth East followers across, in fact , it was only respondents from the What on Monymusk page, and then only limited responses from outside the post code.

4.2.4 This survey does not accurately represent the CATS application. It was made before the Gravitate North East Information Day. It includes bias, inflammatory language, exaggeration and inaccuracies.

4.2.5 The response to this survey, which was held before the Gravitate North East open day, contains inaccuracies about Gravitate North East, and exaggerates the impact of the proposal, implying a one hundred times higher level of use. The issues

and inaccuracies raised in the survey were responded to at the open day. It should be noted that some residents felt intimidated by FoP survey and have felt they can could not meetings or even speak openly to Gravitate North East. We have considered the issues raised in the responses.

4.2.6 This refers to the informal discussions that members and trustees undertake, attending Community Council Meetings and the CATS and Planning Application consultations.

5.1.1 The proposal is aligned with national and Aberdeenshire Woodland Strategies, and will not limit timber extraction.

5.2.13 The biodiversity improvement proportionate to the scale of the development, and linked areas of diverse habitat will by definition increase biodiversity.

5.2.14 The trails construction methodology specifically prevents erosion in any where on the trail

5.2.16 The wet areas (up to 2mx2m) will be on flatter ground within the Biodiversity corridors for example around the start of Downhill Trail 2.

5.2.17 This approach , called micro-siting, is standard practice for construction in this environment. The environmental benefit derives from the presence of the biodiversity corridor itself.

5.2.18 Please see response 1.6 regarding the route of the Upper Climb Trail.

5.2.19 The area will be replanted and hide the car park (Douglas Fir will reach 3m high in around 5 years.

5.2.20 In our experience night time riding occurs during the winter afternoons, normally just after office hours.

6.1. Gravtiate North East visitor numbers are based on an estimate of the number of gravity-focused mountain bikers within 3,2,and 1 hour travel times, and the expected frequency of their visits. These are then ground truthed against other rural mountain biking facilities (e.g. Forest of Ae, Glenlivet, Tarland, Innerliethen) their size and nature of the trails. These are then calibrated against Developing Mountain Biking Scotland visitor number estimates from numbers using mapping applications.

6.2 There is an uplift in Innerleithen in the Tweed Valley (referenced in this document). Published visitors are 10,000 riders a year, operating from Thursday to Sunday. The scale of this operation is much larger than our proposal.

6.2 The Uplift Shuttle has a limited capacity that requires purchase of a ticket prior to arrival. This therefore limits the visitor numbers, a maximum of 10,000 riders a year. It does not increase visitor numbers above those at Tarland as assume

6.2 The 10 mins incremental travel time from central Aberdeen, or even greater for different locations, does not determine visitor numbers. Riders are more likely to be influenced by the style of riding.

6.4 Gravitate North East volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. Therefore, the maximum estimate of 15,000 per year will not be discernible above the background and other development in the area.

This is consistent with the data in the FOP appendix. 313 cars in one direction, equivalent to 620 cars in both directions and 221.000 cars a year.

We also counted cars at Mountain Biking event in May.

6.6 see answers above on the uplift shuttle. The speed restriction will be 10mph, the Site Operation Plan will be updated.

6.8 We assume an uplift occupancy of 48% due to loss days due to poor weather and low weekday attendance.

6.20 SEPA will be consulted during the planning application process.

6.21/22 The car park and trail design has met all the required flood and water management requirements during the planning process.

6.23 The car park is sized to accommodate more than peak visitor numbers and different vehicle types. Please refer to the Road Traffic Statement submitted to planning.

6.24 Commercial and natural regeneration will screen the car park within 5 years.

6.25 Overnight parking will not be allowed on the site. The car park will be monitored using CCTV. The car park is sized to accommodate more than peak forecast visitor numbers.

6.26 The Operation Plan makes provision for relevant events to have Public Event Licences (PEL). This is a public process that provides for consultation and redress.

6.29 The uplift capacity for a day (maximum 47) is well below the car park capacity.

6.30 We don't believe this is problem. This has not been observed at other rural car parks that charge for parking. It’s more likely that cars that currently park in parking spaces and verges will use the dedicated car park.

6.31 We hope that those long term users of the forest will see the benefit of the car park and toilets and improved management of the site and would donate to their up keep.

6.32 Anti-bacterial gels will be provided.

6.33 No the PDWA will not be vulnerable to pollution and erosion. We would point out that two public roads, with much higher traffic load, agricultural land and domestic residences also lie within the PDWA with no ill effects.

6.35 There have been numerous events hosted at Pitifichie Hill over decades by mountain bikers and other user types, 4 mountain bike events in the last year alone. Traffic has moved perfectly throughout all of these events.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0830

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Thank you for your thorough review of our proposal. The key focus of your representation addresses the financial viability of the proposal. Forestry and Land Scotland will undertake a review of the financial sustainability of the project in the next stage of the CATS process. Today, Gravitate North East believes that the fixed annual payment covers the cost of land lost to forestry. We will continue to work with experts and FLS on an operating and economic model for the shuttle.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0840 SERC

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

The uplift route is south from the car park location, passing above Roy Hall, then turning right up to the top of the hill on the road to the bottom of the existing path up the hill.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management.

The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible.

We believe the car park is a significant improvement on the current unauthorised parking and turning on the forest roads. We don't see the need to allocate specific horsebox bays, but are happy to see them on site. Advanced notice might help best prepare spaces and turning. We would support SERC on any later investment in the site dedicated to parking for horse boxes.

The gates will be as specified by Forestry and Land Scotland. The roads are managed by them. We will lobby in our design for gates to be suitable for access by horses.

The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road. We do understand that this is an issue of safety, as it would be if a horse was passed by traffic on a public highway.

Please note that provision is made to reinstate the road to the top of the hill. The path is currently maintained, gorse cut back and kept open by the Aberdeenshire Trail Association Volunteers.

We are aware of provisions for horse riders. One of our members and her kids hack round the forest, and unfortunately there are few other horses around. She would appreciate better access with the horse box.

Please get in touch if there are any issues you would like to raise throughout the project.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0850

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. On your other particular point, the economic benefits are at three different levels. Firstly, from visitors' day to day expenditure e.g. lunch at the COOP in Kemnay, or filling with Petrol, Secondly, from investment in the site for local contractors and professionals (e.g. contractors salaries) and ongoing costs (e.g. drivers and cleaners wages) and lastly by increasing the appeal of the area and so generating new businesses, maintaining school rolls and house prices.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0860

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. On your particular points

- The trails are constructed using material along the trail; there is no imported material, the existing ground is reshaped. The car park may require some imported material. There will only be one or two diggers to site. So emission are very low.
- Unsanctioned parking has not been observed at other rural car parks that charge for parking. It's more likely that cars that currently park in parking spaces and verges will use the dedicated car park. We hope that users of the forest will see the benefit of the car park and toilets and improved management of the site and would donate to their upkeep.
- The toilets are waterless, there is no water supply or discharge required.
- Emergency access is provided to the meeting point of the two downhill trails.
- There are people living in the village today because of the easy access to mountain biking. It has been seen that other popular outdoor activity areas have attracted younger workers to rural communities.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0870

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

We would point out that Pitfichie Hill has been a mountain biking venue that already has thousands of visits a year since 1990. The proposal is very much in keeping with the current use.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible.

The trails and car park will be hidden in the pine forest and by the fall of the land. The area, currently clear felled, will be replanted with Douglas Fir, which will reach a height of 3m in 5 years. Even within the current clear felled areas pioneer species, such as birch, would hide the trails from view.

The trail design is based on proper drainage and preventing erosion. This is essential not only to protect the environment and water supplies, but also to protect the trail and minimise maintenance costs. The trail construction methodology, inspection and maintenance protect the trails and consequently they have no impact on water supplies. Our proposal will be reviewed by SEPA and the Planning Authority.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0890

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. We hope that we can use electric vehicles for the shuttle, but we are not able to commit to this at this time.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However, it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

We believe that we can improve the biodiversity of the forest through work in the Biodiversity Corridors and the wider area. The trails and riders will be confined to a small area, only 0.5% of the Pitfichie Hill area. However, the biodiversity corridors (8%) will break up the commercial pine monoculture benefiting insects, birds and therefore mammals. Gravitate North East has been granted funds to further develop a Biodiversity plan by the Neighbour Ecosystem Fund.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and

volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0900 CMMCC

Dear CMMCC, Frank, Ian,

I am very disappointed that the representation presented to FLS by CMMCC failed to

- reference the letters of the support for the proposal to the CMMCC from members of its constituency
- reference Gravitate North East responses, on agenda items, at CMMCC meeting over the last year
- reference evidence gathered by Gravitate North East and provided to the CMMCC
- Supporters attending the CMMCC meeting on the 7th September
- reference committee members visits to races, Aberdeenshire Trail Association Maintenance Days and other mountain biking sites.

By restating the objections in 26-27-01LEAS ATR Representation 080O the committee has failed to critically assess the claims it makes, failed to consult on these with the wider community and failed to constructively engage with Gravitate North East on these issues over the last year. The CMMCC's representation does not present a balanced view of all the views of its community; it simply restates the views of one group.

We are sure that any material planning concerns have been addressed through the Planning Application scrutiny and consultation.

We asked for advice on our proposal in August 2025, hoping the council would fill their role as a neutral arbiter. We have tried to work with the CMMCC for more than a year, and we have appreciated the interest and understanding shown by councillors. However, we have had concerns that the council has been structurally biased against the proposal. This is confirmed now by some councillors submitting their own individual representations.

Our proposal has been made stronger through time spent with the community council, and we have made changes to the proposal because of the council's feedback. Our proposal will, actually, solve all the issues raised by residents over the last year through better, specific site management. More than that, with positive community engagement , it will be an amenity for sport, learning, volunteering and biodiversity that the council could be proud of.

Regards

Mike

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0910

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0920

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. On your particular point, the trails and car park will be hidden in the pine forest and by the fall of the land. The area, currently clear felled, will be replanted with Douglas Fir, which will reach a height of 3m in 5 years. Even within the current clear felled areas pioneer species, such as birch, would hide the trails from view.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0930

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

We would point out that Pitfichie Hill has been a mountain biking venue that already has thousands of visits a year. The proposal is very much in keeping with the current use.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible.

The trails and car park will be hidden in the pine forest and by the fall of the land. The area, currently clear felled, will be replanted with Douglas Fir, which will reach a height of 3m in 5 years. Even within the current clear felled areas pioneer species, such as birch, would hide the trails from view.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0940

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. The Road Traffic Statement in Planning Application APP/2026/1295 provides a more detailed response to the road traffic calculations.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0950

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. On your particular points

- The trail design is based on proper drainage and preventing erosion. This is essential not only to protect the environment and water supplies, but also to protect the trail and minimise maintenance costs. The trail construction methodology, inspection and maintenance protect the trails and consequently they have no impact on water supplies. Our proposal will be reviewed by SEPA and the Planning Authority.
- Gravitate North East volunteers will be onsite most days to ensure that the operation plan is working; the site is litter free, clean and addresses issues quickly. This is an improvement on the current site management.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0960

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0970

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. On the point you raise about visibility, we have considered the visibility of the car park and toilets in selecting the site. The trails and car park will be hidden in the pine forest and by the fall of the land. The area, currently clear felled, will be replanted with Douglas Fir, which will reach a height of 3m in 5 years. Even within the current clear felled areas pioneer species, such as birch, would hide the trails from view.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0980

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. Particularly on littering, Gravitate North East volunteers will be onsite most days to ensure that the operation plan is working; the site is litter free, clean and addresses issues quickly. This is an improvement on the current site management. And on utilisation, there are very many bikers living in the village, and surrounding area that ride regularly at Pitfichie. We believe the scale of the proposal is appropriate for this level of local demand.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 0990

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. The Road Traffic Statement in Planning Application APP/2026/1295 provides a more detailed response to the road traffic calculations.

We believe the scale of the proposal is inline with the demand from a keen group of local mountain bikers that ride on the trails at Pitfichie. These riders age from 7 to 70.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 1010

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. The Road Traffic Statement in Planning Application APP/2026/1295 provides a more detailed response to the road traffic calculations. On water supplies, the trail design is based on proper drainage and preventing erosion. This is essential not only to protect the environment and water supplies, but also to protect the trail and minimise maintenance costs. The trail construction methodology, inspection and maintenance protect the trails and consequently they have no impact on water supplies. Our proposal will be reviewed by SEPA and the Planning Authority.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 1020

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 1030

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

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The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. On your particular point not already covered, Forestry and Land Scotland will undertake a review of the financial sustainability of the project in the next stage of the CATS process. At this point, Gravitate North East believes that the fixed annual payment covers the cost of land lost to forestry. We will continue to work with experts and FLS on an operating and economic model for the shuttle.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 1040

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. To your particular point, relevant raptor surveys and measures to protect them are required by planning. We believe that we can improve the biodiversity of the forest through work in the Biodiversity Corridors and the wider area. The trails and riders will be confined to a small area, only 0.5% of the Pitfichie Hill area. However, the biodiversity corridors (8%) will break up the commercial pine monoculture benefiting insects, birds and therefore mammals. Gravitate North East has been granted funds to further develop a Biodiversity plan by the Neighbour Ecosystem Fund. And, as you suggest we will seek to maintain and monitor improvement throughout the lease.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 1050

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

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The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. In particular

- Gravitate Northeast has been working for over a year with FLS, Cluny Monymusk and Midmar Community Council, Planning Authorities and Professional services to develop the application. The proposal has been revised and updated based on that feedback.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 1060

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However,

it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. In particular

- Gravitate Northeast has been working for over a year with FLS, Cluny Monymusk and Midmar Community Council, Planning Authorities and Professional services to develop the application.
- There is provision in the capital plan for upgrading the forest road to the Bealach.
- The car park is open at all times. The access road is closed when the uplift is not running (currently it is open to private cars).

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 1080

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

It's a shame you couldn't have made it to the hall in person because, even though we were focused on non-mountain bikers and those not informed, the support was quite strong, despite the hostile environment created by some objectors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes

on this stretch of forest road.

The proposal will improve the wildlife and wider environment on site. The vast majority of the area, 250 hectares, will be a plantation of conifers. On the plus side, this will completely screen the car park and trails from view in a few years. However, it is a large area of monoculture. A small proportion of land, 1.4 hectares, will be taken for the trails and car park but we will be able to manage about 20 hectares to improve biodiversity. The impact of riders on the environment is very low because they are confined to the trails, bikes move quickly and quietly, and are well spaced more than a minute apart on average. All practices to protect wildlife will be followed, and in fact improve the environment, and we hope that the whole community will join us in projects to promote biodiversity that would not be possible without a lease from Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation.

On your specific points

- visitor numbers are based on an estimate of the number of gravity-focused mountain bikers within 3,2,and 1 hour travel times, and the expected frequency of their visits. These are then ground truthed against other rural mountain biking facilities (e.g. Forest of Ae, Glenlivet, Tarland, Innerliethen) their size and nature of the trails. These are then calibrated against Developing Mountain Biking Scotland visitor number estimates from numbers using mapping applications
- Forestry and Land Scotland will undertake a review of the financial sustainability of the project in the next stage of the CATS process. At this point, Gravitate North East believes that the fixed annual payment covers the cost of land lost to forestry. We will continue to work with experts and FLS on an operating and economic model for the shuttle.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 1090 MONEST

Dear Sir Archie,

As we have discussed, Gravitate North East is seeking to improve the management of mountain bike events. Some event organisers are new to the area and do not have the resources to properly manage events. Gravitate North East members know the area and what is required for a well run event. We will have signage, marshal, stewards and planning that means any event is well managed. We will also require events to have Public Entertainment Licence where this is relevant, so that there is proper consultation and independent oversight. A number of events you mention, had failings because the Estate did not provide what was contracted, and failed to manage conflicting activities on the sites.

We appreciate your support in assessing different sites, and the offer of considering the Steading and adjacent fields for the car park. This is attractive because it does avoid travel down the single track road. However, following technical evaluation and planning advice we had to choose a location with the forest close the trails because

- The steading location directly impacts the protected status of the castle.
- The car park is not hidden within commercial forestry cover.
- Locations in the fields above the castle, closer to forest access, were directly located close to water wells.
- This area lies on a line of surface water and small watercourse flooding shown on the SEPA mapping.
- A new track would need to be constructed across these surface water areas.
- There is a high likelihood that former agricultural land will require imported construction material.
- The events this year showed that long transit routes to the trails were the root cause of litter, urinating in public and damage to property.
- Informal parking would continue because riders and other users would continue to drive up into the forest anyway.
- The low visitor numbers, or situation, does not support the investment required to develop the Steading to realise the benefits you suggest.

The site chosen has limited visual impact, is away from the water course, minimises construction and is compact so easy to manage.

Obviously, we are disappointed that the Estate will not support the proposal that is not based at the Steading Site.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 1100

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

Gravitate North East represents a group of forest users, mainly mountain bikers, some from Monymusk, taking responsibility for better management of the forest with local accountability. Objecting to the proposal does not stop mountain biking on site; it means its growth continues without improving management. The proposal will focus riders and traffic on trails and the car park, separating them from other visitors as much as possible. The shuttle service (uplift) may seem like an extravagance to non-bikers, but it is a key facility for modern mountain biking, particularly for younger riders that are inspired to try mountain biking, challenge themselves or enter competition. The shuttle vehicles will pass by every 15-20 min. So, to give this context, you could see two, maybe three, vehicles while walking the mile-long route. On balance, the shuttle is an improvement on the current volume of traffic and bikes on this stretch of forest road.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this

proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.

Gravitate North East

Thursday, 08 October 2026

Pitfichie Hill bike trails and car park | Forestry and Land Scotland

Ref: 26-27-01 LEAS ATR Representation 1110

Dear Respondent,

I apologise; names of respondents are not available to us.

Thank you for your representation to FLS regarding mountain bike trails, car park and toilets at Pitfichie. I'm sorry that you can't support what our members believe will be a great amenity for Aberdeenshire, particularly for young people, participation in sport and enjoying the outdoors.

It's a shame you were not able to attend our information meetings because, even though we focussed on those that were new to the project and biking, there was a good level of support, despite a confrontational approach from some objectors.

Although the annual visitor numbers of up to 15,000 cars feels high. Monymusk will still be a quiet village with the car park at Pitfichie Hill. To put it in context, volunteers counted an average of 106 cars an hour passing through the village at different times of day over a 10-day period at the end of August. This is equivalent to 850 cars a day, or around 290,000 a year. They also counted cars attending an event at Pitfichie in May, and even at peak times, there was no impact on traffic through the village. The trustees also checked that there will be free flow of traffic on the single-track road to Pitfichie (available on the planning permission website). In fact, our proposal will bring the road up to standard, benefiting both residents, farm and forestry users. Also, it may not be clear that the proposed shuttle (uplift) limits the number of users, we estimate to around 5,000 a year.

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APP/2026/1295 provides a more detailed response to the road traffic calculations.

The Gravitate North East trustees have addressed all the issues raised at community council meetings in our planning proposal, including the concerns you have raised in your representation. On the particular points you raise

- visitor numbers are based on an estimate of the number of gravity-focused mountain bikers within 3,2,and 1 hour travel times, and the expected frequency of their visits. These are then ground truthed against other rural mountain biking facilities (e.g. Forest of Ae, Glenlivet, Tarland, Innerliethen) their size and nature of the trails. These are then calibrated against Developing Mountain Biking Scotland visitor number estimates from numbers using mapping applications.
- Forestry and Land Scotland will undertake a review of the financial sustainability of the project in the next stage of the CATS process. At this point, Gravitate North East believes that the fixed annual payment covers the cost of land lost to forestry. We will continue to work with experts and FLS on an operating and economic model for the shuttle.
- We believe that we can improve the biodiversity of the forest through work in the Biodiversity Corridors and the wider area. The trails and riders will be confined to a small area, only 0.5% of the Pitfichie Hill area. However, the biodiversity corridors (8%) will break up the commercial pine monoculture benefiting insects, birds and therefore mammals. Gravitate North East has been granted funds to further develop a Biodiversity plan by the Neighbour Ecosystem Fund. This will include the relevant baseline surveys.

For most of those that live in Monymusk or use the wider forest, the new car park and shuttle will have no, or only a positive impact. We understand for some it may mean a change, but it will be better than the current situation. With your support, this proposal could produce a high-quality local amenity that engages young people and volunteers, improves biodiversity and is a community project Monymusk can be proud of.

Thank you again for your interest, I hope we can work together in the future.

Mike Wilkes

Chair, Gravitate North East

On behalf of Gravitate North East Trustees and Members.