

**Letter of 16th August 07 from Ian Thomas to Roseanna
Cunningham MSP**

**Comrie Development Trust proposed Buy Out of Cultybraggan
Army Camp**

Dear Roseanna

I was wondering if there was any progress with regard to my email of the 10th August?

I realise that you are very busy and these things take time to consider.

The problem is that the CDT is to vote (a vote of CDT members) on Monday. The structure and integrity of this vote is hopeless (postal ballot papers with no reference number or identifying features for one), but this is a side issue.

The ideal outcome is for the Minister to suspend the process for a fixed period prior to this vote happening. This would then allow the whole village to vote on a properly constructed legal question, without spin and deception, and with time to consider the issues fully. The protocol and independent oversight of the vote should also be substantially improved upon of the last ballot.

If a suspension of the RTB process and a community ballot re-run is not possible, then I would very much like to progress my complaint to the Ombudsman ASAP. If you are unable to do this for me for any reason, could you advise me immediately of your reasons.

It is my understanding that as an MSP, your remit is to endeavour to resolve complaints of this nature by perhaps mediation and compromise. Importantly, for all parties now involved in this matter, a suspension of this RTB would enable the CRTB dept to carry out a proper audit of procedures in respect of their interpretation of clauses within the Land Reform Act and would also give time for the CDT to come up with a meaningful plan for the site that the village could consider. This is totally lacking at present, what DTZ have

been doing for £80K was a total mystery to everyone present at the meeting last monday.

Just in case you feel that the issues I have raised are just my opinion, I would beg you to endeavour to sound out the village (outside the immediate circle of Alan Caldwell's friends and acquaintances) on how the village was misled over the consequences of the question in the first ballot; the financial viability of the project and the funding sources. Ask people what they thought of the information presented by the board and the consultants at the meeting on monday.

This whole issue is splitting the village and creating a lot of bad feeling, this was never the intention of the Act and in fact Ministerial consideration of any RTB must look carefully at the potential for division within communities. It appears from my general research regarding other RTB scenarios that the Scottish Executive has considerable discretion in respect of timescales on a RTB. This legislation is very new and it would create confidence in the Act and serve everyone in Scotland well to get things working properly within the first ten or so buy-outs. I think this is a great opportunity for you to show leadership on a topic that I know must be dear to you.

Apologies if you have been burning the midnight oil on this one, but I can't know that unless you tell me. I look forward to your reply.

Regards

Ian

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