

# Lazonby Neighbourhood Plan

Lazonby Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

C/O Clerk to Lazonby Parish Council



15<sup>th</sup> Aug 2017

Dear Sirs,

I write to you in the capacity of Farms Manager for Brackenburgh Home Farms and am therefore responsible for all of the agricultural operations on the farms which include Lazonby Fell.

I am deeply concerned regarding the proposals to permit public footpaths on any of the areas in forestry or on the heathland on Lazonby fell.

Most of the area is a designated site with SSSI status. The lowland heath is an increasingly rare example of the typical habitat that has been once common on the fell sides between the Lake District and the Pennines. The area is deemed to be in an 'improving state', with the ambition to be recorded in an 'excellent state' in the near future. This improvement requires management, and this is achieved with a very precise level of stocking with both sheep, cattle and pigs, scrub thinning and removal, and at times both chemical and mechanical control of bracken. All these operations are carefully co-ordinated alongside other activities which take place on this site, such as quarrying, timber harvesting, forestry work, deer stalking, a syndicate shoot, hound trailing and a gundog training club. All these activities have been chosen because of their compatibility and enhancement of the site. All these individuals are informed and inform me of their needs so that there is complete understanding of what's 'going on', the implications to other users, safety considerations and fire risks. These trusted and invited groups are the 'eyes and ears' of the estate, and thereby our guardians. They share our ethos, work to a common goal and are very aware of the many natural hazards within the site such as the unprotected disused quarry holes and workings. They understand the risks of being on the site amongst bulls and calving cows which roam freely and when heavy machinery is operating or when a shoot might be in progress.

Permitting any sort of uncontrolled public access would render this coordinated operation untenable. The risks to these groups, the livestock and visitors would be immeasurable. The disturbance to the SSSI wildlife at sensitive times of the year would be uncontrollable unless I became a full time warden. Dog worrying, theft, litter, fly tipping and path erosion are other concerns.

I would not support any proposals that might interfere with this present harmonious arrangement.

Yours faithfully,

James Turner (Farms Manager)