

# PORTMOAK PARISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## AREA 47

Professor David Bellamy,  
c/o Durham University,  
Biological Sciences Department,  
South Road,  
DURHAM  
DH1 3LE

Our Ref : RMS/PPCC/peatmos2

20th June 1995

Dear Professor Bellamy,

### **REF : RAISED PEAT BOG OF PORTMOAK MOSS**

I am writing to you on behalf of the community of Portmoak Parish which is situated to the East of Loch Leven in Kinross-shire, Scotland. My reason for writing to you is to request your help and/or advice in preserving the Portmoak Moss in perpetuity as a public amenity. In order for you to understand the nature of our request I need to give you some background information on the Moss and the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Firstly as part of their declared programme, Forest Enterprise began to sound out interest in the sale of the Moss to private purchasers. When the community council became aware of this they called a public meeting to ascertain the community's views on this. Sufficient interest was shown for approaches to be made to Woodland Trust with a view to purchase and jointly manage the Moss. It is our intention that the Moss should be changed by planting a much larger proportion of broad-leaved trees and encouraging greater public access. In the long term we would also wish to encourage greater bio-diversity of both flora and fauna.

One of the obvious assets of the Moss is the large raised peat bog still existing to the north of the woods. It is in regard to this feature that we are writing to you in your capacity as an acknowledged expert in this field. You will find some details of the Moss in the enclosed appeal form.

*Please reply to :-*

*R M Spilsted, 3 Bankfoot Park, Scotlandwell. Kinross-shire KY13 7JP*

*Tel : 01592-840-537 (Home) 01383-822-131 (Work) Fax : 0592-840-815*

As a community we are angry that we should have to pay to purchase a property which, in theory, is already in public ownership. In our campaign to obtain control of the Moss we have decided to adopt a multi-faceted strategy which can be summarised as :-

- 1 Attempt to raise the purchase price defined by the District Valuer (£75,000.00).
- 2 Oppose the sale on the basis that the property has already been purchased by the taxpayer.
- 3 Oppose the sale on the basis that the Moss is of special scientific interest.
- 4 Oppose the sale on the basis that it is an important breeding site for wildlife.
- 5 Seek to negotiate the sale at a lower price.

We have asked the warden of a local bird sanctuary to organise a survey of the Moss for point 5.

With reference to point 4 we are seeking professional help in examining the raised peat bog and advising if there are grounds for claiming it as a site of scientific interest which must be preserved from destruction. Your help and/or advice on this would be much appreciated. We have a real fear that a private sale would result in the wholesale stripping of the mature trees (30 years old) and possibly the peat to the detriment of the wood and the peat bog.

I understand from Professor Sexton of Stirling University that peat bogs are under threat throughout Scotland and this is especially true of raised peat bogs. If this is an accurate picture then it becomes imperative that we safeguard our one at Portmoak. Owing to your publicised interest and influence on these matters, we would request your help and/or advice in furthering our campaign. There is some urgency behind our request as we believe that we only have until early September 1995 to make our move. After this time it is likely that the Moss will be offered for sale to any prospective purchaser.

If you wish for any further information on this matter then I can be contacted as detailed on page 1.

Yours sincerely,



R M Spilsted (Mr)  
Community Councillor - Portmoak Parish