

Looking back at the Benty

1970 & 1995 REPORTS ON THE BENTY RIDE-OUT: PAGE 12



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Buccleuch boss pledges to get project to the line

Benny Higgins criticises Scottish Land Fund for its rigidity over its grant



Roger Maxwell, Langholm Common Riding chairman, tells Alex Thomson about the traditions of the event and the importance of the Common Moss to the townspeople

BUCCLEUCH'S chief executive has pledged his continued personal support for the Langholm Moor community buy-out.

In an exclusive interview with the E&L Advertiser Benny Higgins said he would do whatever he could to help the Langholm Initiative achieve its ambition.

His comments came on the day that a Channel 4 News team spent the day in Langholm interviewing people about the £6.4m project to buy 25,000 acres from Buccleuch.

Mr Higgins was critical of the Scottish Land Fund (SLF), which has awarded £1m on the basis that the Initiative find the rest of the money by the end of October or it will lose its grant.

He said: "I spoke to Kevin Cumming (project manager) and Margaret Pool (chairwoman) on Tuesday and they are committed to getting to the figure which came out of the joint valuation.

"I said I was keeping my fingers crossed for them. They know we're still hoping they will get there."

He was conscious that it was a tricky environment currently but the project was all good and, if the Initiative needed to talk to him, he would try to be flexible and would be prepared to give them more time.

He said: "The problem with that is the SLF imposed a target and wants proof of funds and that all the legals are done by that date and that's not acceptable.

"I think that's far too rigid, probably on both counts and especially getting all the legals done.

"I made the point that the rules be amended a little and it was better to give them more time.

"I certainly propose to write to Roseanna Cunningham, secretary for environment, climate change and land reform, to suggest it would be better if the government gave them more time.

"I'm comfortable with giving them more time and the Initiative is still determined to stick with Plan A. A bit more time would give them that chance."

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Langholm Common Riding

SCIO no. SC044989



The members of Langholm Common Riding would like to thank all those who made the effort to respond to the statement placed in the E&L Advertiser on 2nd July. They have considered all the comments made and appreciate the concerns of local people at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As we said in our statement placed in the paper on 26th March, Common Riding 2020 could not take place in its customary way. We also said that we would consider any restrictions in place as we reviewed options nearer the end of July.

Although restrictions are gradually being eased the virus has not gone away. The members have at no time wished to risk large crowds potentially bringing the virus to the town. It is clear from the responses we have received that the public also take this view.

Therefore, with regret, Langholm Common Riding 2020 is cancelled but the boundaries will be marked at some point.

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