

**DRAFT**

**Cairngorms National Park Authority's Communications and  
Engagement Strategy 2018–2022**

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## **Overview**

1. Communicating with visitors, communities and stakeholders is vital for the work of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA's). Our role is to raise the profile of the Park and create a connection and commitment to care for it with identified audiences so they actively support the Park and benefit from doing so.
2. Building trust and understanding of the CNPA's and delivery partner's roles will ensure we work collaboratively and make best use of our public resources to make a significant contribution towards delivering Scottish Government Outcomes in terms of Conservation, Visitor Experience and Rural Development.
3. Over the next four years we anticipate considerable change both in terms of how we communicate and engage with our audiences and in terms of the political climate and our available resources. Consequently, this strategy supports the Scottish Government Communications Plan's five core principles:
  - a) **Digital first** – we will focus on our digital and social media activities and capabilities in recognition that more people than ever are engaging with us in this way and that it provides an effective and cost efficient way of reaching with specific audiences;
  - b) **Evidence and Insight** – we will ensure our communications activity is based on sound evidence and audience insight, so we can take a strong audience led approach to our work particularly through our digital communications;
  - c) **Robust Evaluation** – we will evaluate our work measuring outcomes where possible, to test impact and continuously learn and improve;
  - d) **Collaboration** – we will support effective and efficient communications across the organisation, through our key partnerships and with the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Scottish Government Directorate organisations; and
  - e) **Innovation** – we will develop and embrace innovation and continually test new ways of working through our organisational development strategy work, particularly in terms of making better use of new technology and learning from others.

## **Strategic Context**

4. The Cairngorms National Park was established in 2003 to deliver the four National Park aims as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000:
  - a) To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
  - b) To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
  - c) To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and
  - d) To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

5. Over the last 15 years the Cairngorms National Park has developed its own brand and built up a strong identity with visitors who enjoy the Park as well as stakeholders and partners who make a significant contribution towards caring for the Park and delivering the National Park aims.
6. The role of the CNPA is to provide leadership for the National Park to tackle the big issues in the Park in a collaborative way. The vision, mission and values are important statements of what the organisation wants to achieve and how it will go about achieving it.

**National Park Vision**

7. An outstanding National Park enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together.

**CNPA Mission**

8. To lead the way in delivering for the Cairngorms National Park by:
  - a) Bringing people together towards a common purpose;
  - b) Enhancing the Park for everyone; and
  - c) Inspiring new generations to be Park champions.
9. The CNPA plays an essential role in leading the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) which sets the context for close cooperation and partnership across public, private and voluntary organisations in the Park.
10. The NPPP sets out three long term outcomes for the Park. These have been used as the basis for developing the Corporate Plan.
  - a) A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced; [colour coded – green]
  - b) People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences; [colour coded – purple]
  - c) A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities; [colour coded – red]
11. The NPPP provides the framework for the CNPA’s Corporate Plan which sets out how the CNPA will contribute to the delivery of the NPPP over the next four years. Within this context, the Communications and Engagement Plan aims to support the delivery of our Corporate Plan and the collaborative delivery of the NPPP.

**Long term aims**

12. The Communications and Engagement Strategy will build on our three communication campaigns – *Cairngorms Nature*, *Active Cairngorms* and ‘*Make it Yours*’, to strengthen the delivery of a consistent message. We will also support the delivery of the priority work areas set out in our Corporate Plan and promote the CNPA’s work and reputation as a public body with statutory duties as the planning and outdoor access authority.

13. To achieve this we will continue to raise the profile of the Park and create an emotional connection and commitment to care for it with identified audiences so they actively support the Park and benefit from doing so. Specifically, we aim to maintain the levels of awareness with visitors grow the reach and active supporters of our digital audiences, increase engagement with the Park and the involvement of people actively caring for the Park through more opportunities to do so.

***Increase levels of awareness of the Cairngorms National Park:***

14. Visitor Survey results in 2016 show 91% of visitors are aware they are in a National Park and of those 93% were aware before their visit. 47% can describe the park brand. An MSP Survey in 2016 shows most know at least a little about the CNP and a third know it well or a fair amount with 43% favourable towards it. In addition, through our digital communications during 2017 there were over 190,000 website sessions (visits) and over 24,000 social media followers with a reach across all our social media of 4.6 million accounts. Our long term targets are to maintain the level of visitor awareness of the Park and the Park brand, maintain the level of awareness and favourability by MSPs towards the Park, increase our digital communications reach and active supporters by 20% each year.

***Increase engagement with the Cairngorms National Park:***

15. Through our communication campaigns visitors and residents have engaged with the National Park resulting in over 2000 participants enjoying the *Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend*, over 400 participants taking part in *Wee Walks Week*, 2,500 John Muir Awards undertaken each year and over 100 visitor-facing staff from 26 organisations benefiting from the 'Make it Yours' presentations in 2017. Our long term targets are to increase the number of participants at the *Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend* and *Wee Walks Week* by 10% year on year and to maintain our engagement in terms of John Muir Awards and *Make it Yours* presentations.

***Increase Involvement in caring for the Park:***

16. Our communications activities provide a variety of opportunities for people to get involved and benefit from the Park. This has resulted in 148 Brand Charter holders, 33 Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend events were delivered by estates and ranger services, 56 junior rangers and 8 volunteer rangers being recruited and trained by the end of 2017. Our long term targets are to increase the number of organisations benefiting from the Park Brand by 10% year on year and to increase the number of people actively involved in helping to care for the Park. We will also provide more opportunities for people and organisations to make a contribution towards caring for the Park through a visitor giving scheme which will raise funds for the Cairngorms Trust.

**Approach**

17. Our approach will be to build our capacity in the use of digital communications to reach and engage with our target audiences. We will also focus on our three campaigns to encourage more people to get close to the Park and create new ways

they can get involved in caring for the Park through volunteering, helping to promote the Park, making donations and corporate partnerships.

18. In addition, to support the delivery of our Corporate Plan and the three long term outcomes for the Park, we will focus on specific audiences who are essential to the successful delivery of the NPPP to build strong and supportive relationships and a shared understanding of how we can tackle the big issues in the Park in a collaborative way. Building these relationships will involve face to face engagement with key audiences where Board and staff members will play an important role.

### **Target Audiences**

19. The Corporate Plan identifies key work priorities to deliver specific outcomes in conservation, visitor experience and rural development. To achieve these outcomes we need to engage with specific audiences and ensure they are aware of the NPPP, how they can support and contribute towards its delivery, opportunities for them to get involved and how they can benefit from our projects and campaigns. These audiences include:
- a) Land Managers and Estates
  - b) Visitors
  - c) Developers and Community Groups
  - d) Residents
  - e) Local Businesses
  - f) CNPA Partners and Influencers
  - g) CNPA Staff and Board Members

### **Priority areas of work**

20. To direct this work we will concentrate on four main work priorities.
- a) **Digital Communications and Social Media:** to continually improve our website, develop and deliver a social media strategy, create online networks with our audiences, particularly Park residents.
  - b) **Communication Campaigns:** to promote consistent messages about the Park and opportunities for people to engage and get involved through *Cairngorms Nature* which encourages visitors and residents to get out and enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the Park, *Active Cairngorms* which encourages visitors and residents to be more active in the Park and 'Make it Yours' which encourages local business and residents to promote the Park, deliver a better visitor/customer experience and benefit from the Park brand.
  - c) **Stakeholder Engagement and Events:** to promote the work of the Park and Park Authority through our stakeholder engagement and events programme with a clear focus on our NPPP partners and influencers.
  - d) **Corporate Communications:** to meet our corporate responsibilities as a public body and promote the work of the CNPA through our corporate publications, public consultations, media relations and our Gaelic Language Plan.

## **Outcomes**

21. Our Communications and Engagement work aims to build trust and understanding with our audiences, to influence their views relating to the Park and Park Authority and to ultimately gain their support and active involvement in caring for the Cairngorms National Park. Over the next four years we aim to achieve the following outcomes.
- a) The Cairngorms National Park is recognised as one of Scotland's leading visitor destinations which provides high-quality, distinctive and authentic experiences, attracting new and repeat visitors from its target markets, making an important contribution towards the Scottish Economy.
  - b) Local businesses, land managers & estates, community groups and individuals are actively involved and contribute to the area's conservation and economic success and benefit from doing so.
  - c) Young, in-active and minority groups are aware of the Cairngorms National Park as a great place for active recreation and are supported to visit and enjoy the Park making an important contribution towards equality, improving people's health and education.
  - d) Residents see the value of being part of the Cairngorms National Park and the role that the Cairngorms National Park Authority plays in this.
  - e) Cairngorms National Park Authority is recognised as the best small public body in Scotland.
  - f) Cairngorms National Park partners and stakeholders recognise the Cairngorms National Park (National Park Partnership Plan) and Cairngorms National Park Authority (Corporate Plan) as a significant contributor towards the delivery of the Scottish Government Outcomes in terms of Conservation, Rural Development and Visitor Experiences.
  - g) Cairngorms National Park partners and stakeholders work cooperatively under the recognised and valued leadership of Cairngorms National Park Authority, becoming more self-sufficient and less dependent on public sector funding.
  - h) Cairngorms National Park Authority staff and Board members are motivated, committed and clear about their contribution towards delivering the Corporate Plan and enjoy working for Park Authority.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

22. The Communications and Engagement Strategy will be reviewed alongside the Cairngorms National Park Authority's Corporate Plan twice a year (June and December) and updates on progress will be included on a quarterly basis as part of the CEO's Update paper prepared for every Board meeting. In addition, an annual Communications and Engagement board paper (September) will consider progress made against agreed targets and set out priority work activities for the year ahead.

23. Specific targets for the next four years include:
- a) **Maintain awareness by visitors** - 91% of visitors are aware they are in a National Park, of those 93% are aware before their visit. 47% can describe the park brand (Visitor Survey 2020).
  - b) **Maintain awareness by MSPs** - most know at least a little about the CNP and a third know it well or a fair amount with 43% favourable towards it (MSP survey 2020).
  - c) **Increase awareness through digital communications** - 400,000 website sessions and 50,000 social media followers by 2022 (google analytics).
  - d) **Increase engagement in our campaigns** – 3000 participants enjoying the *Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend* by 2022, 600 participants taking part in *Wee Walks Week* by 2022, 2,500 John Muir Awards undertaken each year and 100 visitor-facing staff benefiting from the ‘*Make it Yours*’ presentations each year (CNPA evaluation and feedback surveys).
  - e) **Increase involvement in caring for the Park** - 220 local businesses are Brand Charter Holders, 60 junior rangers and 30 volunteer rangers are recruited and trained by 2022. A visitor giving scheme is trialled to raise funds for the Cairngorms Trust in support of two community projects by 2022 (CNPA evaluation).

**February 2018**

**Francoise van Buuren**  
**Head of Communications & Engagement**  
[francoisevanbuuren@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:francoisevanbuuren@cairngorms.co.uk)  
**(01479) 870523**