
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

- Title:** UPDATE AND FORWARD LOOK
- Prepared by:** Douglas Stewart, Outdoor Access Officer
- Purpose:** This paper provides an update on the main areas of work both undertaken and planned towards delivery of the five year outcomes in the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan.

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN.

Long term outcome: People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences

Priority 5 - Active Cairngorms

I. Active Aviemore

CNPA has £40k Sustrans funding to develop non-motorised access provision for the proposed new hospital in Aviemore and wider community.

- a. The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) is working in partnership with Aviemore & Vicinity Community Council, Hitrans, The Highland Council, Sustrans and NHS Highland to encourage residents and visitors to Badenoch and Strathspey to be more physically active outdoors.
- b. AECOM Consultants have been recruited to manage the design and consultation phase.
- c. Public consultations have been on-going since February 2018
- d. A large and diverse group of residents turned up to share their views on active travel design options.
- e. High level of positive support has been submitted.
- f. Feedback favours a segregated cycle path along Grampian Road.
- g. AECOM will now prepare a consultation report and discuss options with key partners.
- h. Sustrans funding will be sought for phase 2 design works during 2018.
- i. Development funding will be sought from Sustrans Community Links Fund from 2019-20 onwards.

2. Wee Walks Week 2018

The objective of Wee Walks Week is to celebrate short walks (3 miles or less) around the Park, raise awareness of the need to be physically active every day and to celebrate those using wee walks to improve health outcomes. In the lead up to and over the course of Wee Walks Week the public are encouraged to pledge to walk stating how many miles they intend cover and how many will be walking with them. They are encouraged to take a Wee Walk by either:

- a. Joining a health walk group;
- b. Undertaking a walk in one of the Community Path Leaflets;
- c. Undertaking their own walk.

Building on from the success of previous years Wee Walks Week 2018 will follow the same format during September with a focus on social media (Facebook, Twitter) to communicate and make pledges.

3. Active Cairngorms Health Walks/Volunteer Cairngorms

- a. CNPA Volunteer Co-ordinator, Mike Woolvin continues to develop the project and strengthen Health Walk groups operating in the Park. Key priorities this year will include piloting 'Dementia Friendly' accreditation with a number of Health Walk Groups in the Badenoch and Strathspey area, and ensuring that the current Health Walk groups remain sustainable and are supported to continue their activities.
- b. Through the Volunteer Cairngorms programme, fourteen Volunteer Rangers have been recruited and trained, and are now supporting 6 Ranger Services across the CNP area with a wide range of activities. An online portal is live at www.cairngorms.co.uk/volunteers highlighting current opportunities to volunteer for nature and the environment across the Cairngorms National Park area, and two new community-based groups are being supported to undertake environmental volunteering in their local areas.

4. Community Path Leaflets

- a. Ballater Community Paths Leaflet has now been reprinted with input from the Ballater community. The update and revision includes reworking the route descriptions in light of the new path grading system.
- b. Badenoch and Strathspey Paths with Easy Access Guide has now been reprinted with updates and amendments.

Priority 4 - Visitor Infrastructure & Information

Management of core paths and outdoor access:

5. Long Distance Paths (LDR's)

- a. **Deeside Way Extension** – An improved planning application is due for submission end of July 2018 for the Invercauld to Braemar section. Once lodged it is hoped approval will follow without further significant delay.
- b. **Speyside Way Extension** - Funding for construction of the Ardgale (Kincaig) to Inshriach section is now in place and construction is planned for this year. An ERDF funding application for the Tromie to Ruthven section has been made and it is hoped an award will complete the package of funding required for this section. The remaining planning applications to extend the path to Kingussie will be submitted by June this year.
- c. **Upholding Access Rights** – Access casework continues to be reported and dealt with according to agreed protocols. Since the last LOAF meeting a small number of new cases have been logged and are being processed. The number of active cases remains low overall. An update will be given under Agenda Item 7.

Other National Park Initiatives/Matters

6. Visitor Giving

CNPA continues to work with Cairngorms Trust & Cairngorms Business Partnership to develop a visitor giving scheme. The intention is to create a mechanism whereby the visiting public are able to make a discretionary 'donation' towards sustaining key infrastructure in the Park which facilitates high quality visitor experience.

7. Mountain Paths

Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust managed HLF and partner funded (CNPA, LL&TNPA, FCS, SNH) project 'The Mountains and the People' is now into the second half of the funded project and continues to upgrade and improve key mountain paths in Aberdeenshire, Angus, Perth and Drumochter as well as Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. Further details available of current activities are available at the project website: <http://themountainsandthepeople.org.uk/>

8. HLF Tomintoul / Glenlivet Landscape Partnership Project

The project has now gained momentum and is well into year two. Land Management Officer Lynn Cassells is now part time and as a result the LMO post has been split into two PTE's hence a second LMO post is being recruited. The access project outputs which include improving the Tomintoul Spur (Speyside Way) and a new low level path linking Glenlivet Distillery and Blairfindy Castle will be coordinated by the new PT LMO. Blairfindy Castle is also programmed for repair and improvement. The Access Project delivery budget is £360k.

The new visitor centre in Tomintoul is now complete and open to the public.

9. A9 Dualling

A number of 'Stage 3' EIA consultation responses have now been submitted. The Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore and Dalraddy to Slochd are outstanding and anticipated shortly. Overall we have been encouraged by the thorough approach taken in dealing with impacts affecting non-motorised users with some innovative solutions to key access considerations. That said there are distinct challenges ahead and opposition has been raised by some communities along the route.

10. Cairngorms Capercaillie Framework HLF Project

The Heritage Lottery Fund has now formally committed £346,500 towards the 18 month development phase of the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project with a further £2.25million potentially available for the delivery phase. The five year project will be focusing on two main areas; providing suitable, improved habitat for capercaillie and involving the public in the future survival of the species. Carr-Bridge has been chosen as a pilot community and they will have a major say on key elements of the project development, helping to work up practical ideas that can be tried and tested with successful initiatives being replicated throughout the National Park in the future. A full news announcement has been posted on the CNPA website: see <http://cairngorms.co.uk/lottery-win-capercaillie/>

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