

CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title: UPDATE AND FORWARD LOOK

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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 2012-17.

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2012-17.

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

Key work package 9 - Active Cairngorms

1. Aviemore Hospital

CNPA is currently in discussion with NHS Highland and Sustrans over funding to develop non-motorised access provision for the proposed new hospital in Aviemore. The objective being to design-in a high standard of provision to ensure that car-free access opportunities are more widely available and chosen by visitors/users. CNPA has recently been awarded £40k of *Community Links* funding from Sustrans to develop the project through the initial stages.

2. Active Cairngorms Health Walks

- a) As previously reported CNPA has received funding (£10,000 pa x 3 years) from Paths for All to extend the CNPA Volunteer Co-coordinator post to FTE. £2k p/a will be contributed by NHS Highland.
- b) A new Volunteer Co-ordinator, Mike Woolvin is now in post and taking the project forward.
- c) Mike is based at CNPA HQ and will spend a minimum of two days a week delivering physical activity projects, including scaling up the health walks projects. The other 3 days will be spent delivering environmental volunteering opportunities, including a Volunteer Ranger Service.

Key work package 12 - Visitor and access infrastructure

4. Management of core paths and outdoor access:

Long Distance Paths (LDR's)

- a) **Deeside Way Extension** – CNPA and Scottish Enterprise are jointly funding the development of the first stage of the Deeside Way extension designing, negotiating and submitting planning consent for the path from Braemar to Invercauld Bridge. A planning application for this is due to be submitted circa June 2017 to the planning authority (subject to land manager approval).
- b) **Speyside Way Extension** - The next phase of the SSW extension from Ardbeg (Kincaig) to Insh will go to Planning Committee with decision expected in June. Funding for construction continues to be sought from partnering organisations. CNPA has secured an additional £100k funding from Sustrans to renew a bridge and improve gating arrangements on the existing Speyside Way between Grantown on Spey and Nethy Bridge. A principal objective of these improvements is to making bike and walking along the section concerned easier.
- c) **Path Leaflets** – The following have been updated with the National Path Grading System- Laggan, Boat, Carrbridge, Dulnain Bridge and Atholl. It is anticipated that Aviemore will be revised and updated next.
- d) **Upholding Access Rights** – access casework continues to be reported and dealt with according to protocols. The number of active cases remains encouragingly low. An update will be given under Agenda Item 2.

Other National Park Initiatives/Matters

3. **Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan** - The 2017-22 plan was approved by the CNPA Board in April <http://cairngorms.co.uk/cnpa-board-approves-park-partnership-plan/> and is now with Scottish Government. LOAF members are thanked for their time and contribution to this five year plan.
4. **Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend** was held on 12-14 May with a range of events across the Park. [TV naturalist Nick Baker was the special guest again in 2017 with an autobiographical talk about his life as a wildlife presenter proving popular in Blair Atholl. See http://cairngorms.co.uk/discover-explore/events/big-weekend/.](http://cairngorms.co.uk/discover-explore/events/big-weekend/)
5. **Mountain Paths** Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust managed HLF and partner funded (CNPA, LL&TNPA, FCS, SNH) project 'The Mountains and the People' enters year three 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 at the project website: <http://themountainsandthepeople.org.uk/>
4. **HLF Tomintoul / Glenlivet Landscape partnership Project** – The bid was successful with full funding awarded. Various posts associated with the project have now been recruited including Land Management Officer Lynn Cassells. Lynn will be

overseeing the access project outputs which include improving the Tomintoul Spur (Speyside Way) and a new low level path linking Glenlivet Distillery and Blairfindy Castle. Blairfindy Castle is also programmed for repair and improvement. The Access Project delivery budget is £360k.

5. **A9 Dualling** – All Stage 2 consultation responses have now been submitted and the CNPA await ‘Stage 3’ consultations. The next formal phase will commence with consultation on ‘Stage 3’ designs which will see working up of detailed road designs and infrastructure catering for specific issues such as non-motorised users. To date we have been encouraged by the thorough approach taken in dealing with impacts affecting non-motorised users. It should be noted that objections have been submitted by some communities along the route.
6. **Cairngorms Capercaillie Framework HLF Bid** – CNPA continue to work with partners to develop a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Capercaillie (safeguarding populations) project. This follows on from the drawing up of the CNP Capercaillie Framework. The HLF development phase will involve shaping a sustainable recreation management model that benefits communities and caper, raising the profile of and building support for caper (hearts and minds), and achieving sustainable caper populations. The plan is to formulate and submit a Stage 1 bid by end of June 2017. The LOAF will be consulted/involved further in due course.
7. **Snow Roads Scenic Route** - Three new installations at Glen Shee, Corgarff and Tomintoul are now complete apart from a small amount of landscaping at each site to be completed during spring this year. Cairngorms Business Partnership has subsequently secured £245k funding from Scottish Enterprise to develop the Snow Roads Scenic Route visitor experience from Blairgowrie to Grantown-on-Spey. CNPA will continue to support the project.
8. **National Park Map with Outdoor Access Information** - Following last year’s successful trial CNPA has secured funding from Ellis Brigham for a print run of 35,000 A3 ‘tear-off’ tourist maps of the National Park with information encouraging responsible outdoor access on the rear of the map. These will be available free to businesses registered with the NP brand along with members of Cairngorms Business Partnership.

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