



association of cairngorms communities
Living and working together in the Cairngorms National Park

AOCC Representatives Meeting Minutes
The Lecht, Tuesday 15th March 2016 at 11am

Present:

Roger Clegg; Kirriemuir Landward West CC	Patrick Ford; Inveresk CC
Kate Adamson; Carrbridge CC/Carrbridge Ahead	Jane Angus; Ballater & Crathie CC
Alasdair Colquhoun; Braemar CC	Val Emmett; Kingussie & Vicinity CC
John Grierson; Aviemore & Vicinity CC	Ailsa Schofield; Kingussie & Vicinity CC
Jane Tansley; Laggan Community Assoc	Jeff Tansley; Laggan Community Assoc
Robert Cumming; Laggan Community Assoc	Tony Thompson; Mount Blair CC
Simon Blackett; Braemar Community Ltd	Deidre Falconer; Kincaig & Vicinity CC
Graham Fraser; Newtonmore & Vicinity CC	Laura Ross; Kincaig & Vicinity CC
Gregor Rimell; Highland Councillor/CNPA Board	David Kinnear; Kincaig & Vicinity CC
Alison Fielding; Boat of Garten & Vicinity CC	Brian Tolson; Boat of Garten & Vicinity CC
Patricia Grant; Kirkmichael & Tomintoul CA	Tom Wallace; Mountain and People Project
Karen Derrick; VABS	Jamie Wilkinson; Local Energy Scotland
Nick Forrest; babyHydro	Nick Mardall; MAP
Murray Ferguson; CNPA	Lee Haxton; CNPA
Mike Cottam; CNPA	
Eleanor Mackintosh; Glenlivet & Inveravon CA/CNPA	

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Donald Isles; Blair Atholl & Struan CC	Maggie Lawson; B & S Community Transport
Oliver Giles; Tomintoul & Glenlivet Devpt Trust	Brian Wood; CNPA Board
Helen Webster	
Stephanie Wright; Cairngorms Learning Partnership	
Liz Cowie; Ward Manager, Badenoch & Strathspey	

2. Minutes of meeting 16.9.15

Approved as a correct record

3. Matters Arising

There were none

4. Finance

Draft accounts for the AoCC financial year ending 28.2.16. Records currently with the examiner and had been approved by the board. AoCC Treasurer Jane Tansley has been in post for two years but would be moving to Perth. Although she was happy to continue until Feb 2017, the AoCC are asking for a volunteer willing to take over this role. They are also looking to recruit new Directors of which there are currently five (the minimum number). It is not an onerous role but does involve meeting with the other Directors and discussing how the AOCC should evolve.

5. Hydro Scheme

The Convenor thanked the members of the Association who had worked on this project. CARES had funded a Hydro Power Options Appraisal for the AOCC, enabling a comprehensive desk top study to be carried out. 1,098 water courses with hydro potential had been identified, but changes to the feed in tariff scheme had seriously limited the viability of most of them.

Nick Forrest (M.D babyHydro Ltd) gave a presentation regarding small hydros, from conception to operation. He said that Feed in tariffs had caused a rush to construct hydro schemes but that this had dropped off drastically due to the reduction in FITS. However ten sites had been identified, and may still be viable. Export tariffs may increase at some time in the future when electricity was harder to get. Another option was storage, set to become bigger and bigger as we would become less dependant upon fossil fuels.

There was discussion regarding the various methods of generating hydro power and restrictions due to fish etc.

6. The Mountain and the People Project

Tom Wallace, Project Officer, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park, who also works for C.O.A.T, said that the Heritage Lottery funded 6.1 million pound project was in its infancy. It aimed to bring about improvements to 125KM of paths, protect natural assets and improve routes. It would involve people in the enhancement and protection of the special qualities of the mountains within Scotland's National Parks.

52 KM were within the CNP, and the intention was to make areas accessible to people without necessarily increasing footfall. SVQ training and education resources would be provided, along with "adopt a path", events & activities, fundraising, and the facilitation of conservation volunteering. Mr Wallace said that if there was an opportunity to support the work of local communities, they could get involved. Recruitment was ongoing for an Aboyne based training officer. They required an enthusiastic person, and there were no age restrictions.

It was asked whether any environmental studies etc were to be carried out before encouraging people to use new paths, but this was not thought to be necessary as they would not be using routes which had not already been defined. It was all about protecting what was already there. This was the latest in a series of footpath works undertaken in the National Park. Surveys were carried out every five years, and previous surveys highlighted how good the condition of the paths and tracks in the CNP are. They are seen as the best in Scotland.

It was asked whether the scheme would help with damage caused by Storm Frank. Talks were in progress regarding this. CNPA have submitted a report to the Scottish Government outlining what the damage is. Grants have been applied for, for 650k worth of work although the total cost will significantly exceed that. Mr Wallace concluded his presentation by saying that over the coming months they were developing a range of opportunities for people to get involved, and asked everyone to spread the message and get in touch with ideas of how to assist individual communities. The ideas must be access related and have an environmental impact. (themountainsandthepeople.org.uk).

7.CNPA Update

As per circular (addendum). There was also an update for board members containing more detail which could be accessed from the CNPA website.

Bug Life would be meeting in Ballater between the 17-19th June 2016.

8.Rural Parliament update – Lee Haxton

There was an event at the Lecht in Aug 2014 which led to the inaugural rural parliament in Oban. There would be a meeting in Brechin on 6.10.16 to form a Rural Manifesto, and potential to hold day trips for people to look at community projects within the national park. The CNPA and AOCC know what the issues are.

The Chairman said that although sceptical, AoCC directors felt that it would be a mistake not to have some involvement. The next AoCC meeting would be held at the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore, and the Rural Parliament could be encouraged to hold their meeting at the same venue in the afternoon. The Rural Parliament held a meeting at Glen Isla, but apparently no one knew anything about it as it had been so poorly publicised. General consensus as to its success was mixed, but the meeting was of the view that there should be some sort of involvement. A consultation would take place between May and June.

9. Raptors – Mike Cottam

At last May's meeting in Blair Atholl the issue of Raptors had been raised but not immediately followed up, and Mr Cottam said that he was at today's meeting to clarify the situation. The Park had expressed recent concerns regarding the balance of moorland usage, the area of most conflict. There is huge polarisation on the subject, but it was hoped that positive aspects would be publicised and attitudes would change.

There was discussion as to whether rogue buzzards were feeding on young chicks and not behaving in their natural way. It was stated that this was not the case, but that these were the sort of conversations which needed to be had. If anyone had any concerns they should pass them to Mr Cottam. It was asked whether the CNP could work in conjunction with Estates/Colleges etc. North Highland College had asked Mr Cottam to go every year to talk to their new intake of students on Gamekeepers courses etc.

Deer Management

Mr Cottam said that he was Secretary of the Cairngorms Deer Management Group, and that the Scottish Govt & SNH had come up with 14 action points for the Group to deliver. An assessment based on a 2014 survey would be used to gauge what improvements had taken place. The CSDMG would be holding their open AGM at Boat of Garten on 20.6.16.

General consensus was that other communities would like to be actively involved in deer management plans. The current plan can be viewed on: www.csdmg.uk Deer Management Plan 2016-2021.

10. Update on aggregated broadband project in the CNP

Mr Archie Macdonald addressed the AoCC re this last year. A steering group had been formed of which the AoCC Chair was a member, and broadband had been incorporated into the Park's economic strategy. High Speed broadband had been rolled out to the most populated areas in the Park, but there were still large remote areas where nothing would happen. These were the areas being targeted by the community led project which communities *must* lead, or nothing would happen. An initial meeting took place during Jan 2016 in Grantown. As a constituted group the

AoCC were asked if they would like to be the co-ordinating body but declined. Discussion was ongoing as to who the new body should be.

CLAG (Leader) is hoping to set up an incorporated group, and become a SCIO. Once that had been done they would set up a trading arm. Alternatively it could be a stand alone group. It was difficult to identify a geographic area in which to invest, but HIE had been contacted and advised re the concerns. Once the project got moving they would work with Community Broadband Scotland, but exactly how they would deliver the service was still to be decided. Papers were on the CNPA website. Hopefully by September 2017 the first people will be connected using this new approach. The AoCC Chairman stated that if anyone from the group would like to represent the AOCC he would be delighted, as it involved a lot of travel for him.

Jeff Tansley suggested that people checked B4RN.com, a website relating to rural broadband for the north. There was general frustration at the amount of duplication taking place, how slow it was, and that it was B.T who were the issue. It was suggested that this concern should be linked to the Rural Parliament Agenda.

11. Reports form Representatives attending external meetings

Developers Forum (Ailsa Schofield)

As per addendum.

12. AOB

A request had been made for an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion for a proposed Wind Farm at Glendye (Patrick Ford, Inveresk C.C). Should permission be granted, it would be highly visible from Glen Esk, 12 km from the Park boundary. With 40 potential turbines, it would be clearly seen when approaching from A90 Aberdeen. The reason for flagging it up was due to it being on the periphery of the Park.

The AoCC did not have a view, but shared concerns regarding the proliferation of such developments. Visual impact and noise was a serious concern, and it was hoped that the CNP planners would be able to ameliorate any visual impact. From a planning point of view, local C.C.s could submit objections/concerns etc although if a development was outside the Park it would not be within their remit. However the CNPA would consider objecting if it was to impact on the N.P. The CNPA Planning Committee Convener said that they had been known to go against the advice of staff on several occasions and object, as they looked on the park as a whole and did not like the constant encirclement of the Park by wind farms.

Date of next meeting: 17.5.16

Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore.