

# CAIRNGORMS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ADVISORY FORUM

## DRAFT MINUTES

**Date:** 3 March 2011  
**Time:** 18:00  
**Venue:** Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore

### Present

1	Jaci Douglas	CNPA Board (Chair)
2	Sally Dowden	CBP
3	Alan Rankin	CBP
4	Debbie Greene	SNH
5	Jeremy Roberts	RSPB
6	Scott Armstrong	VisitScotland
7	Colin Simpson	Highland Council
8	Nick Mardall	Deeside/Donside Development Officer
9	Murray Ferguson	CNPA
10	Chris Bremner	CNPA (Secretary)

### In attendance

1	Pete Crane	CNPA
2	Heather Trench	CNPA

### Apologies

1	Johnnie Grant	Rothiemurchus Estate
2	Jamie Williamson	Alvie Estate
3	Bryn Wayte	Ballater Business Association
4	Rita Marks	Association Cairngorms Communities
5	Robert Armstrong	Aberdeenshire Council
6	Keith Legge	Cairngorms Hostels
7	Mike Purdie	Glenshee Tourism Association (AoCC)

### Welcome and Introductions

1. JD welcomed everyone and the apologies were noted.

### Item 2 – Apologies

2. Noted above.

### Item 3 – Minutes of the Last Meeting

3. JD advised that Action Point 1 from the last meeting was ongoing, and action points 2 & 3 were both complete.

### Item 4 – Europarc Assessors Visit: initial feedback

4. Richard Partington, the appointed Europarc verifier had visited the Park on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Although there were a few minor hospitality issues around his

visit, initial feedback from him was largely very positive. He felt the area was well-managed and that there were lots of good stories to tell, especially around the Cairngorms Business Partnership, the CNP brand identity, Ranger Services and the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust. A draft version of his report should be available within the next few weeks.

**API: CB to circulate report when received.**

#### **Item 5 – Cairngorms Business Partnership draft operational plan**

5. AR gave a short presentation on the CBP operational plan for 2011-12 which will be presented to their interim board next week. Included in the plan is a £100k package of marketing work, with 50% funding coming from VisitScotland's Growth Fund. As well as the Growth Fund application, VisitScotland will be working with CBP on UK marketing, digital media, outreach and quality assurance over the next 3 years.
6. There was a short discussion on CBP engagement throughout the Park. A meeting had been held a few weeks previously in Deeside to give businesses information on the role of various business organisations. NM advised that businesses seemed particularly impressed with the CBP's advocacy role, but there continued to be a perception of bias towards Strathspey that he hoped would be addressed soon through roll out of Park-wide What's On and other related initiatives. In the meantime it might help if CBP could avoid using visitaviemore.com email address.

#### **Item 6 – Park Brand identity and ongoing marketing work**

7. AR gave a short update on the development of the marketing framework and design guidelines document. The new strapline of 'Make it Yours' has been approved by the steering group and was proving to be popular. HT clarified that there were basic design guidelines for all brand users which form the first part of the document. The second part of the document which includes advice on the use of the strapline, photography and print layout is for use in Park-wide marketing only.
8. There was a short discussion on monitoring success of the marketing framework, and AR confirmed that CBP were looking to set Key Performance Indicators for the work.
9. PC advised that various publications and interpretation panels were being updated to reflect the change in the Park boundary and this offered an opportunity to use the new design guidelines and strapline where appropriate.

#### **Item 7 – VisitScotland update**

10. SA outlined changes to VisitScotland's structure from 1<sup>st</sup> April. Malcolm Roughead, the new Chief Executive is dedicated to mainstreaming sustainability in the organisation. The new structure has 5 divisions: Marketing; Digital

Media; Partnerships; EventScotland; and Corporate Services. SA will be working in the Partnership division as one of 4 area directors, covering the North of Scotland (Highlands, Moray and the Western Isles). A director for the East of Scotland has yet to be appointed but will cover Aberdeenshire, Angus and Perthshire.

11. The roles of Quality Assurance Advisors and Business Relationship managers will be merged to give businesses one clear point of contact. Sustainability issues will be merged into all QA schemes, but GTBS will remain as an additional stand-alone scheme.

**AP2: SA to circulate new structure and contacts when finalised.**

12. In discussion, the changes to the VS structure were broadly welcomed. It was acknowledged that while the CNP was now split into only 2 administrative VS regions (previously there were 3), there were still frustrations that the CNP was divided by the structures. SA currently acts informally as the main CNPA contact and there was discussion about requesting that arrangement be clarified and formalised. In the meantime it was agreed that once the East Area Director was in place they would be invited to attend the next forum meeting.

**AP3: HT to contact East Area Director when in post**

13. DG pointed out that SNH had recently also reduced the CNP's administrative areas from 3 to 2. MF advised that CNPA is keen to see greater integration of support from public bodies as funding is squeezed, and is trying to bring partners together to discuss this.

**AP4: MF to report back to next meeting on integration of public support.**

14. SD confirmed that Wild Scotland had merged with Active Scotland to form one industry body for the adventure travel trade.

**Item 8 – Park Aware**

15. AR advised that the objectives for the Park Aware project had been confirmed as: to help businesses deliver brand values to customers; and to bring together interpretation, research & training.

Tall Poppies Consultancy has been appointed to develop a project plan, and Jennifer Medcalf will be working on this over the coming months. A project outline, costs and template will then be discussed with CNPA and other stakeholders.

16. There was a discussion about the extent to which the same programme was suitable for everybody. AR felt that there could be slightly different approaches to different audiences but with consistent messages. 'Park Aware' is a working title and is likely to change. It was noted that there may be opportunities to roll the program out to community groups and schools.

**Item 9 – AOCB**

17. RSPB are having a meeting with a couple of outdoor activity providers to discuss environmental impacts and were very positive that this sort of direct contact will help promote sustainable tourism. A wider event for other providers may follow.
18. CNPA are hosting a couple of open evening meetings to gain feedback about the planning service and invited anyone to come along. They will be chaired by Duncan Bryden & Peter Argyll with assistance from Planning Aid Scotland.

#### **Item 10. Date of next meeting and future agenda items**

19. There was a discussion about the future operation of the forum during which the following points were made:
  - It's good to have papers to read in advance of the meeting
  - Items that are for information only could just be circulated by email
  - The forum seems dominated by the public sector
  - The evening meeting format does not seem to have encouraged private sector participation
  - There is significant overlap with delivery team meetings
  - Several members have poor record of attendance – some nominated candidates have attended none of the meetings so far. CNPA should contact them with a view to making sure attendance remained strong.
  - The new VS Partnerships Sustainability Manager should be invited to the next meeting.
  - All members should contribute agenda items as appropriate through the secretary for agreement by the Chair. The Forum is an advisory forum and will work best if partners bring issues to the table in advance of them being agreed. Otherwise it is hard to see how the Forum will have any influence on Sustainable Tourism in the Park.
  - Meetings should 'piggy-back' on other events where possible.

#### ***AP5: HT to contact new VisitScotland Partnership Sustainability Manager when in post.***

20. It was agreed that the meeting scheduled for May would be dropped. The next meeting will therefore take place on **Thursday 25th August in Deeside** by which time it will be possible to talk about the Next National Park Plan and the Local Development Plan.

Heather Trench  
4 March 2011