

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

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**FOR DISCUSSION**

**Title: COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

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**Purpose**

This paper presents an update of current communications activity, plus outlines a number of key priorities for the next quarter.

**Recommendations**

**The Governance Committee is asked to:**

- a) Review activity across a range of communications channels in the past three months and discuss the identified priorities for Q2 of 2023.

**Olly Davies**

**20 February 2023**

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**1. Key comms deliverables / achievements**

a. Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A formal invitation to tender has now been drafted by our partner agency to inform the selection of a new website development contractor. The tender includes a detailed analysis of our existing digital estate (both that controlled by the Park Authority and by third-parties), audience personas and key user journeys, and design standards we expect the successful bidder to meet. A core part of this project is to meet and ideally exceed international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), and findings from last year's web accessibility audit have been baked into our approach on the new site. We plan to run a two-part tender exercise from early March. This is expected to take approximately 14 weeks with the hope of starting work in</li></ul>
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	<p>autumn this year. In the meantime, work continues with internal workshops involving key organisational teams on user journeys and site mapping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new website is currently in the works for the Cairngorms Nature Festival, which is due to replace the Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend this May. Inverness-based agency Strut (who look after our current site) won the contract to deliver the site. You may remember that last year our digital team turned around a fairly basic £250 WordPress templated site for the BIG Weekend to address structural issues with its predecessor; however, this project is much larger in its scope, including a dedicated events system that can ‘plug in’ to other sites once the new CNP website is live. We plan to have the new site live before the end of March to coincide with wider promotion of the event itself.</li> <li>• Work has begun on upgrading our Google Analytics account, which helps us analyse levels of engagement with our websites. Google Analytics 4 represents a real sea-change in the way Google measures / tracks users on the web, moving away from headline numbers and towards more specific user journeys (across multiple devices). Given that our new website will be built around specific audience types and optimised to make it as easy as possible for them to find what they are looking for, this change should help us sense-check and adapt our approach for specific users; however, the new account will take a while to set up and adapt to so we will be looking to our new web developers to assist with this process.</li> <li>• Our <a href="#">Heritage Horizons microsite</a> has been fully updated to reflect feedback from various stakeholder consultation exercises and to explain next steps. Over the past few months 1,406 people have visited the site and we have received 578 contributions – an encouraging result given that the majority of consultations wrapped up well before December.</li> <li>• Donald Ross, our Digital Developer, is taking an 18-month career break at the end of March to complete a BA Hons in Fine Art at UHI. Donald has been instrumental to the development of multiple digital projects over the past few years, including an upgrade to the current cairngorms.co.uk site in 2019 and the creation of microsites for NPPP4 and the Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend. Recruitment has begun for a new Digital Projects Coordinator to pick up some of Donald’s workload and we hope to have someone in place before the award of our website development tender.</li> </ul>
<p>b. Social media and blogs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alongside our partners in the Cairngorms Business Partnership, we launched a targeted social media advertising campaign in January encouraging people to visit during the winter months. The campaign positions the Cairngorms as a place ‘where winter comes to life’ and is designed to address objective C5 of NPPP4,</li> </ul>

	<p>specifically to ‘stabilise visitor numbers in the peak season, focusing growth on quieter months’. It is based on detailed market research last year with 1,000 adults from Scotland, the north of England and the south of England, which showed that the Cairngorms was seen by many as a preeminent winter destination. The campaign has three main strands – interactive Google Display adverts, Facebook and Instagram Stories, and Spotify / podcast audio ads. In its first few weeks the campaign reached well over 500k people, with 97% of our Spotify audience listening to the whole 20-30 sec advert. A toolkit has also been developed for local businesses to ‘brand’ their content as part of the campaign. Activity runs until mid-March, at which point we will engage with businesses in the area to judge its effectiveness and plan next steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All major Park Authority-led social media accounts have been updated in line with our new brand guidelines to demonstrate a much clearer ‘family resemblance’ between our primary and secondary channels. This includes updates to Cairngorms Nature, Cairngorms Rangers and Cairngorms Volunteers, with the Cairngorms Youth Action Team soon to follow. We are also working closely with colleagues in CBP to provide advice on how they can update their social channels and website to incorporate the new VisitCairngorms brand. Work has begun to develop a training and support programme to ensure greater collaborative working between familial accounts, including the creation of internal accessibility for social media guidelines which have been reviewed by the Equality Advisory Panel.</li> <li>● Perhaps more significantly, we are now beginning to see the impact of our new tone of voice / content guidelines on the type and presentation of content we're sharing on our channels. A major strand of this is showcasing the people of the National Park through our Cairngorms Voices platform. Stories over the past few months include a <a href="#">spotlight on our junior rangers</a>, information on the UK’s <a href="#">first outdoor dementia resource centre</a>, a feature on the <a href="#">accessibility work of Able2Adventure</a>, the origin and importance of <a href="#">Aviemore parkrun</a>, a celebration of the <a href="#">International Day of Women and Girls in Science</a> and a series of stories to mark <a href="#">LGBT History Month</a> in February.</li> <li>● Other digital comms outputs included a celebration of the Speyside Way that highlighted the historical and archaeological importance of the route and the stories of people who use it, organic content around COP15 which highlighted work undertaken in the Cairngorms with respect to biodiversity, and guidance for winter visitors in response to adverse weather that included walking, water and ice safety.</li> </ul>
c. Press and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The team have been working closely with colleagues in Conservation to arrange and promote a <a href="#">number of ‘Beaver</a></li> </ul>

	<p><a href="#">Blethers'</a> on 9, 16 and 22 March in Kingussie, Kincaig and Aviemore. The sessions are designed to provide residents and local land managers with a clear picture of what happens next, address any concerns they may have and highlight potential mitigation measures. A number of 'vox pop' video interviews have been created with key stakeholders and members of the project team to bring this work to life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage Horizons continued to dominate our media output, with releases to highlight a <a href="#">series of community roadshow events</a>, <a href="#">climate emergency workshops</a>, an <a href="#">artist residency opportunity</a>, and <a href="#">a report on when the National Park is likely to reach net zero</a>. We continue to explore broadcast / podcast opportunities to develop some of these stories further as Heritage Horizons enters its delivery phase.</li> <li>• Other news stories over the period include a <a href="#">celebration of our access work</a> on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Land Reform Act, <a href="#">Xander's decision to step down as Convener</a> in July, a report on <a href="#">wader numbers in the eastern Cairngorms</a>, and the Park Authority lending its support to The Highland Council's <a href="#">short-term let planning policy</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>d. Public / stakeholder engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board elections were a key strand of activity during the period, initially to encourage members of the public to stand and later for them to vote. Alongside the usual promotional effort – a flyer circulated to all households via THC, social media content, updates to our website etc – we have created a couple of videos (see eg <a href="#">this Twitter version</a>) featuring people from across the Park talking about what they look for in future board members. We also promoted a series of drop-in sessions in each of the five wards before Christmas, followed by an online drop-in in mid-January. It was encouraging to see a record 20 candidates put their names forward by the deadline on 15 February.</li> <li>• As previously mentioned, preparations are well underway for the new Cairngorms Nature Festival, including printed materials, a new website, advertising campaign etc. In order to assist with this effort – and in line with our <a href="#">Young Person's Guarantee</a> – we are recruiting two paid interns for an initial four-month period: a Gaelic Language Intern to support the creation of Gaelic content and materials and a Digital Content Creation intern to provide additional on-the-ground support for the festival.</li> <li>• In January – alongside CBP – we held two events for businesses in the Park, looking at how we can best support them to celebrate their place in the National Park. The interactive sessions gave us an opportunity to highlight the new 'proud to be part of' brand charter, and to explore which branded materials would be most beneficial to businesses. Items including easy-to-fold maps, branded merchandise, photography and video assets and social media templates (and accompanying training) were all popular</li> </ul>

	<p>and we will look to develop five or six key items over the next few months ahead of the busy season. We are also holding a follow-up session in conjunction with the Ballater Business Association AGM on 15 March to gather views from the east of the Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been a raft of public engagement for the Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme. During November a series of ‘Climate Conscious Communities’ workshops were run by Keep Scotland Beautiful, with some sessions in person and some online targeted at residents, businesses and young people. A roadshow event was run in Ballater which combined the Active and Sustainable Travel projects with workshops for Climate Conscious Communities and the Wellbeing Economy. Workshops also took place across the Park for the Community Arts and Culture project. Run by consultants Lateral North, these brought together a wide range of creatives to brainstorm ideas on how the creative sector can contribute to positive climate action and other HH ambitions with wellbeing, nature and the circular economy.</li> </ul>
<p>e. Publications and branding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A full set of brand guidelines for the National Park family of brands has now been finalised, alongside the development of a series of practical templates and user guides for staff and third party contractors to use. These include Word and Powerpoint templates, Teams backgrounds, email signatures, pop-up banners and ‘how to’ documents on our style guide, accessibility / legibility, tone of voice and photography standards.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">inaugural issue of Cairn magazine</a> was due to be distributed in early December; however, significant issues with a third-party distributor (complicated further by bad weather and ongoing Royal Mail strikes) meant we were unable to confirm which households received copies. We have received a full refund on the print and distribution of the last issue as a result, and will attempt to reuse some content in a bumper 20-page spring edition in mid-March. This issue will be delivered by Royal Mail, but we will keep an eye out for further strike updates and update the committee should this impact on delivery timescales.</li> <li>• We are working closely with the Highland Mainline Community Rail Partnership to update around 25 National Park signs across six stations in the Cairngorms. The current panels are very faded and on a number it is now impossible to read the word ‘Cairngorms’ or to see elements of the osprey brandmark. This will be a good opportunity to roll out the refreshed brand to a wider audience.</li> <li>• Ahead of the new visitor season we are updating our ‘Tread Lightly’ materials for rangers to hand out on the ground, including the creation of a simple guide around avoiding wildfires in the National Park. We have also taken a lead role in helping coordinate national messaging around wildfires, pulling together</li> </ul>

	<p>representatives from the Scottish Wildfire Forum, Scottish Fire and Rescue and VisitScotland (who coordinate all visitor messaging across Scotland).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A range of materials for junior rangers have been developed, including a new awards journal, promotional posters for monthly junior ranger events and an end of season project review document / Powerpoint slides for the National Parks UK ranger conference in November. All used the refreshed brand guidelines / toolkit elements to standardise their look and feel.</li></ul>
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## 2. Priority comms activity over the next three months

A range of comms activities are planned over the next three months; these are summarised below. These projects will take place alongside a regular programme of Comms activity, coordinated through our centralised Content Working Group.

- **Conduct a tender exercise for the new Cairngorms National Park website(s) via Public Contracts Scotland and work to update content on the existing site so it is ready to be ported over**
- **Support the Conservation team in promoting and delivering stakeholder engagement activity for beavers (and to a lesser extent capercaillie)**
- **Finalise brand refresh project and rollout across digital and relevant print channels, including two issues of *Cairn* magazine, railway signage and materials for businesses in the Park**
- **Complete Heritage Horizons engagement programme and pull together comms materials to support delivery phase application to NLHF**
- **Deliver a new website and accompanying promotional materials for the Cairngorms Nature Festival in May**
- **Work with partners locally and nationally to deliver timely and appropriate messaging for visitors to the National Park, including supporting Ramblers Scotland's young visitor campaign**
- **Firm up plans for the Park's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary later in 2023 (September)**