

COMMUNITIES IN THE NATIONAL PARK SMALL GRANTS SCHEME FINAL REPORT

Purpose

To report on the results and achievements made in implementing the Communities in the National Park Small Grants Scheme 04/05.

Executive Summary

When in March 2004 the CNPA launched its 'Communities in the National Park - A Small Grants Scheme for Community Activities and Events' we could not have predicted the popularity of such an initiative. The programme was established to engage with communities in the National Park's first year. It gave local community groups the chance to apply for support of up to £3,000 to enable them to undertake activities and events that related with some aspect of the Cairngorms National Park.

In the seven months, (March to October 2004), that individuals and organisations could apply to the scheme, the CNPA received over 200 expressions of interest with 87 completed applications. Of those applications, we approved 49 projects, reaching our budget ceiling of £100,000 for the scheme (£45,000 of which came from the Cairngorms LEADER+ Programme).

We have funded projects from village theatre, fete's, gatherings and sports events, to garden development, publishing historical material and art competitions. These events and activities have taken place throughout the Park, from Grantown and Glen Livet to Ballater, the Angus Glens and Kingussie, touching a significant cross section of the National Park Communities. They have involved both young and old making their mark and starting something that may become an annual tradition to be proud of.

As well as the delivery of the projects, the Authority has also had the opportunity to learn from and to better gauge local community needs. This has included establishing the elements of grant giving which are both robust and yet sufficiently flexible for the clients, from application right through to reporting and completion.

SCHEME DESCRIPTION

Background

1. Launched on 15 March 2004, the Communities in the National Park Small Grants Scheme was intended to assist and encourage local communities to undertake activities and events that marked their inclusion in the National Park, deepening their involvement and commitment to the aims of the Park. A grant of between £500 and £3,000 was available for events and activities related to the 4 aims of the Park, in particular focusing on the natural or cultural environment of the National Park. In assessing applications, it was important that the impact of the event or activity would continue into the future. However, the Scheme was not prescriptive and community groups were encouraged to be innovative and imaginative in their applications.
2. This paper concludes the implementation of the Communities in the National Park Small Grants Scheme. It sets out the major achievements as well as noting important factors to be considered for future grants given by the National Park. For more detailed background information and scheme specifications, please see the Board Briefing Paper: "Pounds to People: a briefing paper on the progress of the Communities in the National Park Grant Scheme" (May 04), and the "Cairngorms National Park Authority, Communities in the National Park - A small Grants Scheme for Community Activities and Events, Guidance notes for Community and Voluntary Groups" - (March 04).

Outcome (What Happened And What We Have Learnt)

Monitoring

3. The overall administration of the Small Grants Scheme was maintained within one operational unit, and allowed us to ensure that we could closely monitor the processing of applications, as well as their geographic and thematic distribution. The table in Appendix 1 below highlights the key Outputs achieved by the Scheme. We achieved and surpassed our targets in all cases.
4. The opportunities created by running this scheme have been in getting quick wins on the ground, engaging the Park Authority with local communities. The processing of new applications involved relevant policy staff internally, gauging demand and honing our policy development on real cases. We also benefited greatly from the experience and financial participation of the Cairngorms LEADER+ Programme. This helped particularly in ensuring project viability and reduced duplication or displacement of other activities.

Substantive issues

5. Information contained in Appendix 2 shows that according to the information provided by the Community Groups, over 17,000 people (locals who may have attended more than one event, as well as visitors) participated in or attended the Events or Activities funded under the scheme - more than equalling the total population of the Park.

6. When we look at the geographical distribution of grant recipient communities (Appendix 3-6), we see that the majority are based in Badenoch and Strathspey. As might be expected, mirroring the population, more than three-quarters of those attending or participating in the Activities or Events also did so in the Badenoch and Strathspey area. However, the activities or events, took place almost on an even basis across the Park area (Appendix 4). This is also reflected in the proportion of proposals that were refused (38 in total), over two-thirds from the Badenoch and Strathspey area.
7. Total amount of grants disseminated was £100,030.14 with over 60% of projects receiving the full £3000 grant (Appendix 7). However, when we consider the maximum and minimum size of project (£508 to £7,700 - including match funding), and the range of grant values, we see that there was sufficient demand within this grant range to meet Community needs. We can also see that despite it not being a requirement, more than half the communities already had some match funding from another source.
8. Reviewing the descriptive comments listed in the table in Appendix 2, the consistent theme is one of the community coming together, learning new skills, of inspiring future action and better appreciation of the local area and others within their own community. There was also appreciation of the ease of use of the scheme, *“The grant scheme is one of the best I have dealt with, straightforward application and assistance was welcome. Refreshing to find a scheme that does not require match funding as it is basically a small pot that can be more effort than it is worth”* - Bel MacAulay, Ballater (RD) Ltd.
9. In terms of the broader impact of the scheme, (Appendix 8: Percentage of Projects Addressing the Park Aims), we can see that Aims 1, 3 and 4 have been the focus of a good proportion of the projects (almost one-third each). This subjective separation of primary objectives showed limited input to Aim 2, (To Promote the Sustainable Use of the Natural Resources of the Area), but it was a part of the broader objectives of some of these events and activities.

Operational Issues

10. While it has been evident that the scheme involved a heavy administrative burden, the process of developing proposals with the Community representatives has been very productive, giving us an opportunity to get the Park Aims and our message across, while at the same time understanding what their constraints are.
11. In analysing the processing time for the grants we have achieved an average of just over 10 days from formal submission to approval. While this does not consider the period of development before final submission, this compares well with other grant giving organisations who can take months and provide very little developmental support.
12. The scheme was initially open to applicants from 15 March to 1 September, later extended to 1 October. The extra time allowed the last projects to be better prepared

and for us to encourage other communities to apply (28 projects approved after 1 September). As Appendix 9, shows the Events and Activities were spread throughout the year.

13. Certain aspects such as registration (or affiliation with a registered group) have not been negotiable, but particularly in the case of Group Size, where the minimum requirement was 20 persons we have had to be flexible. As Appendix 2 data shows, over half of the groups failed to meet the minimum membership size requirement. Their grant approval was ultimately given, due to their track record, or affiliation to more substantial organisations.

Policy Context

14. The scheme was placed under Theme 4. Balanced, thriving and sustainable communities in the Operational Plan 04/05. This was developed from the Corporate plan 04/07, where the scheme (while not directly mentioned), contributes mainly towards the following outcomes; Capacity Building in Communities, Tourism and Cultural Heritage. The scheme can be said to have much wider policy related inputs, its main areas of contribution are also to the themes of a “Park for All” and “Developing an Enabling Organisation that is Trusted and Respected” (Corporate Plan 04-07).
15. **Delivering Sustainability**
The scheme was set up as a one-off, encouraging communities to engage with the National Park. However, projects were assessed on the basis of their potential to leave a lasting positive reminder or to establish an annual event. The majority of projects have succeeded, and preparations are underway for the next annual events (eg, Cairngorms Texas Scramble golf tournament has been placed in the fixture list). Other projects established foundations for further development, inspiring the community to re-invigorate existing activities or take on new ideas.
16. **Delivering a Park for All**
While all projects were assessed on the basis of their inclusiveness and contribution to “A Park for All”, 6 projects directly addressed special needs (data in Appendix 2). However, it is also important to note that while support was being provided to develop proposals, we had the opportunity to convey what we mean by a Park for All. By placing this in the context of the event/activity it provided a foundation for future work and understanding of how to address this at the community level.
17. **Delivering Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy**
As has been presented above, the scheme has reached and surpassed all targets. The processing and administration of grants has been to our target of 10 days and we were able to ensure that all projects when submitted had been reviewed in detail and suggestions made to improve their structure and focus.

Implications

Financial Implications

18. The scheme delivered to budget and has proven to be a very effective mechanism for implementation of activities, as well as delivery of funds on the ground. Empowering the communities to undertake these projects may be the most effective way for us to achieve the Park Aims with interventions of this scale and with our limited capacity.

Presentational Implications

19. The publicity and attractiveness of this scheme (ease of application, 100% of costs etc), gave us a very effective means of engaging with the communities. In many cases this resulted in exchange of proposal ideas undoubtedly enriching the scheme and the event or activity. In the long run this has created a basis for both our development of support mechanisms, and an opportunity for communities to understand and relate their work to the aims of the National Park.

Implications for Stakeholders

20. Partly due to the success of the scheme, and despite being clear that this was only a one-off scheme, we have inevitably raised expectations, but initiated new events/traditions, and helped communities to identify niches to follow-up on. In future we will be looking to build upon the established relationships and to inform our policy development from what we have learnt this year. We expect there to be a more focussed set of grants available in the future, as well as wider and better informed engagement with community stakeholders in National Park related projects.

Conclusions

21. As has been explained above, the scheme has been a resounding success, achieving all that we set out to achieve with it. We have successfully engaged with communities through the scheme, and learnt the following lessons that will feed into future Grant giving by the Authority;
- a. Clarity of outcomes (goals) expected helps us and the community to focus projects,
 - b. Targeting for the Park Aims 1,3 and 4 has been clear in the proposals we accepted, but in future we will have to look very carefully at targeting Aim 2, (To Promote the Sustainable Use of the Natural Resources of the Area).
 - c. In future, funding in tranches, may be more useful for us in managing funds, spacing out the administrative burden and linking in with partners funding schemes (eg, SNH new scheme follows a tranche based approach),
 - d. The geographical distribution of population and the diversity of community interests varies enormously across the Park and we need to be careful when targeting grants to ensure that these will achieve expectations and remain inclusive.

- e. Starting small and given the opportunity, many communities quickly develop capacity and enthusiasm to effectively take on greater and more diverse events and activities.
 - f. There is a real demand for “Small Grants” of the scale in this scheme, with simple procedures and quick response and support.
22. The above information is part of the wider learning that this scheme has facilitated. It will now feed into how we proceed with the Grants given by the Authority, particularly in terms of operational processes, but also in how we engage with local communities and how they can best meet their own needs as well as contribute to the Aims of the Park.

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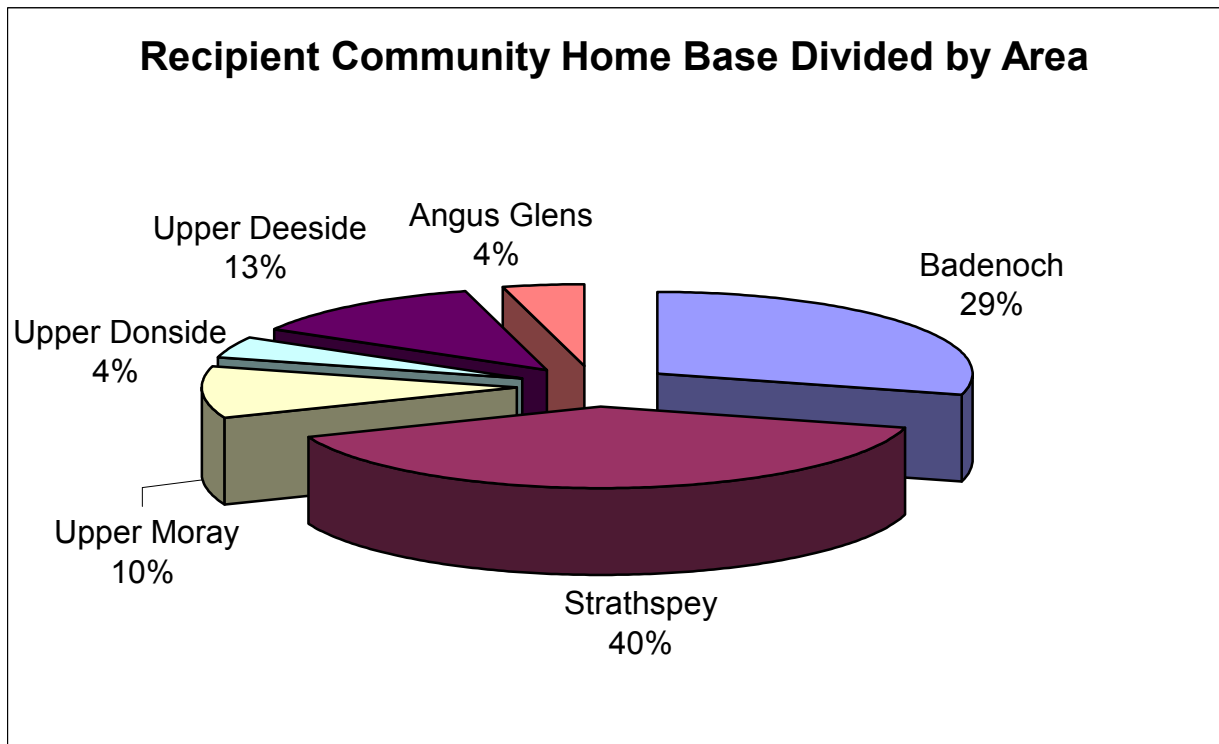
Appendix 1: Communities in the National Park Small Grant Scheme 2004/05 - Key Outputs

OBJECTIVES	OUTPUT BY SCHEME COMPLETION
Establish operational systems and procedures - ensuring flexible, efficient and robust management of the scheme	Consultant produced Scheme Guidance, Specification and main Standard Forms. Scheme Managements systems fully operational by launch. Staff delegation and put into practice.
Launch and promote throughout the Park - making maximum number of local communities aware of the opportunity for events/activities funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mail-out to over 200 Community Groups • 4 Local Press releases in the Badenoch & Strathspey Herald and the Deeside Piper & Journal • 2 Park Life Articles • Yellow three fold Flyer internally produced, over 100 copies printed and disseminated. • Staff & Board Members have actively promoted the scheme. We received over 200 expressions of interest in the scheme by phone, email and letter.
Support proposal development - service applicant groups to make sure that they maximise the chance of success with their proposal.	Not all enquiries led to a formal application, but over 87 applications were received, most of which were developed with consultation. Upon closure of the scheme we were fortunate to have more eligible projects than funds, and therefore able to support only high priority projects.
To support projects involving at least 25 community groups or organisations in the National Park area.	49 projects approved, only one of which had to be cancelled.
To ensure that there is a spread of supported projects across the National Park and across the range of community organisations.	See Appendix 4 map, as well as Appendix 2 & 3, indicating that there were a higher proportion (69%) of successful grant recipients on the Badenoch & Strathspey side of the Park (Appendix 2), but delivery in terms of location of activities/events (Appendix 3) shows a more even spread of influence throughout the Park.
To support projects that wherever applicable reflect the National Park's aims of inclusiveness and a "Park for All" , and which demonstrate that consideration has been given, and implemented in practice, to the needs of all sections of the community.	All applications were assessed with the criteria of inclusiveness and their contribution to the Aim of a Park for All. In addition, we supported 6 projects where the focus was directly on achieving a Park for All (T041.004, 026, 054, 056, 057, 074, see Appendix).
To ensure most effective delivery of all funds within deadline - liaising with groups to ensure any potential under spend can be used in other projects.	Final delivery against budget shows that we paid out as grants a total of £100,072.04 (overspent by £72.04).
Establish a baseline from which the Park Authority can understand community needs and develop future Grant Giving.	The administering of the scheme has provided a wide range of information, which we will use in development of future grant schemes we initiate.

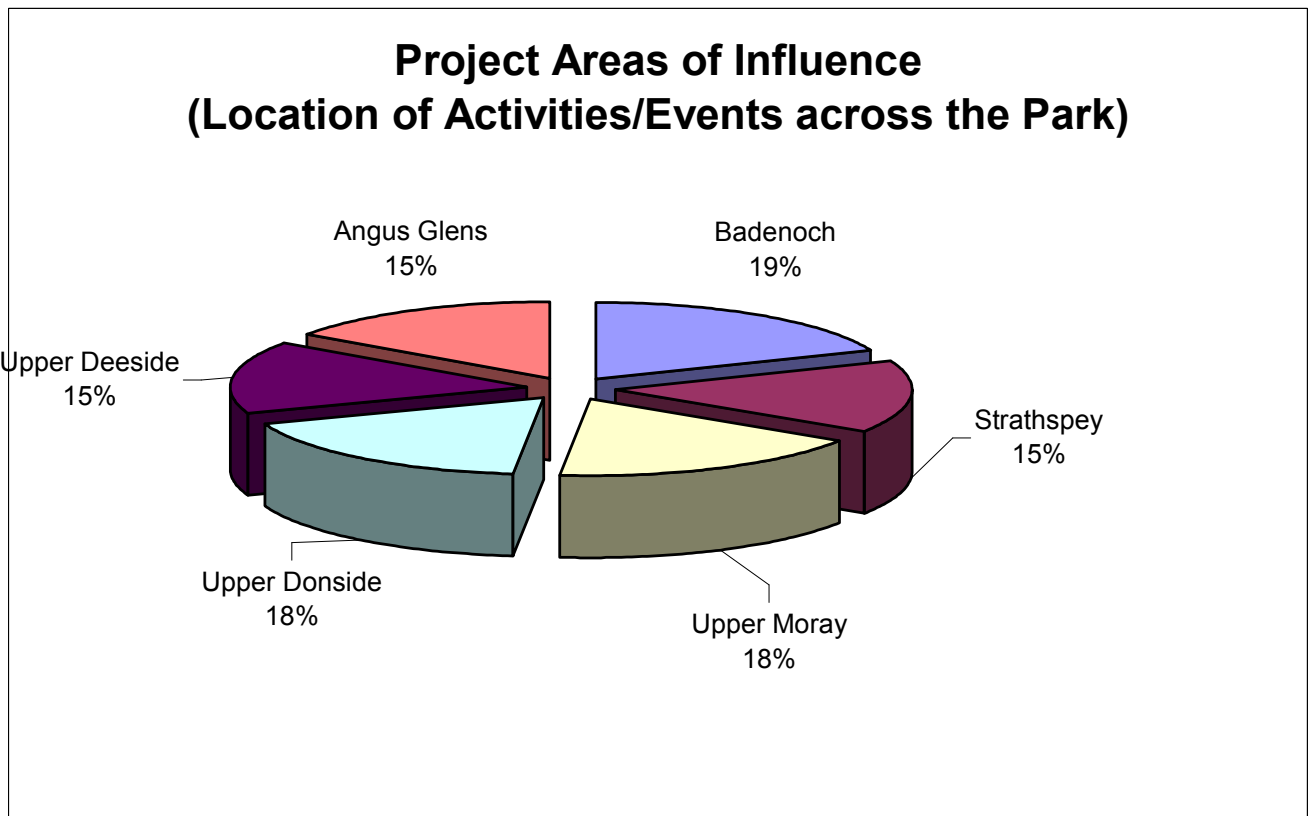
Appendix 2: Communities in the National Park Small Grants Scheme Data Table

(Available as a separate paper)

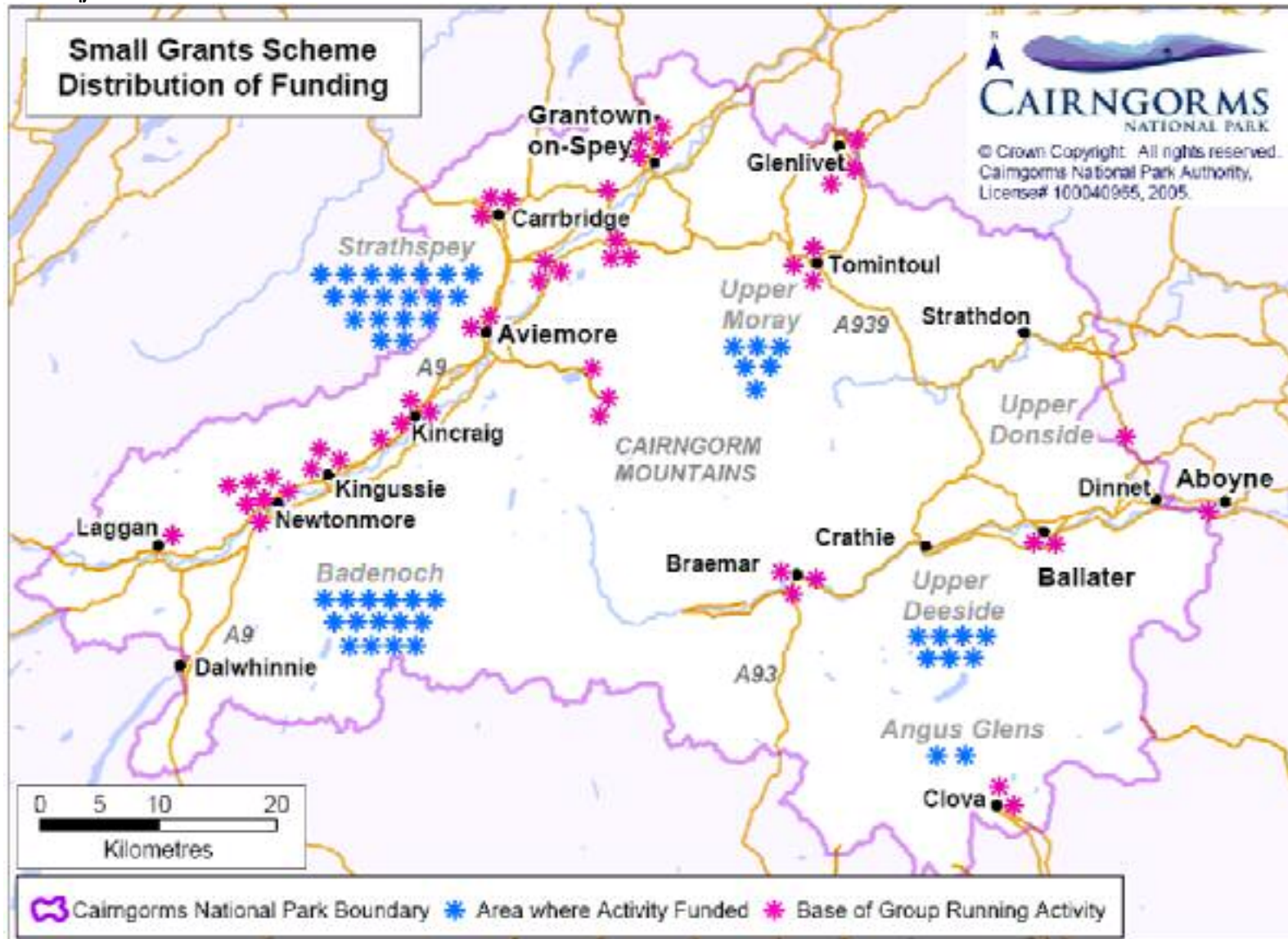
Appendix 3:



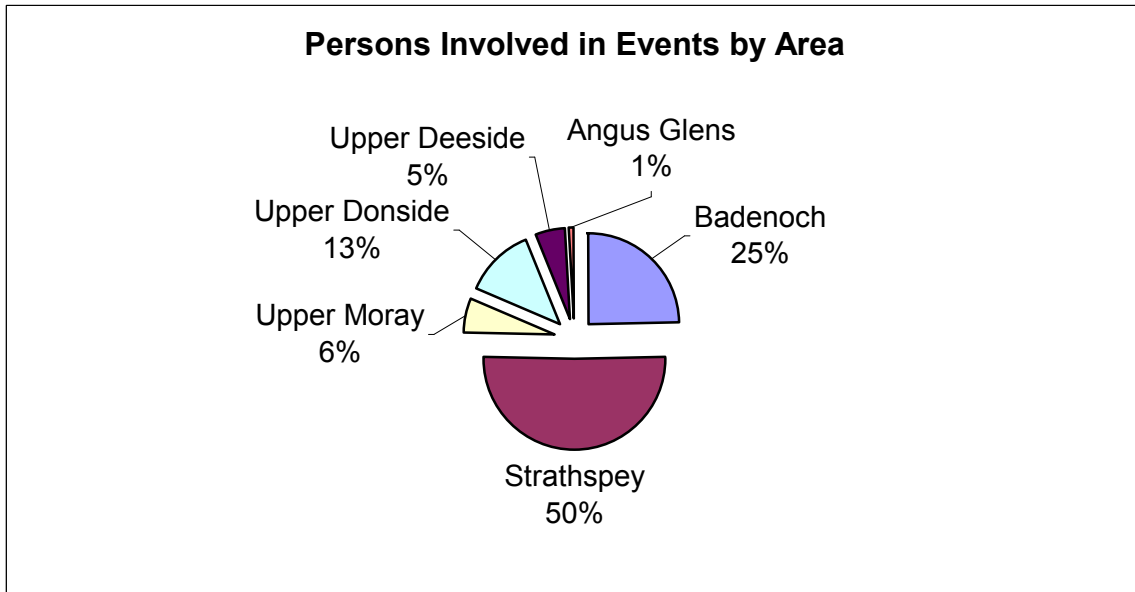
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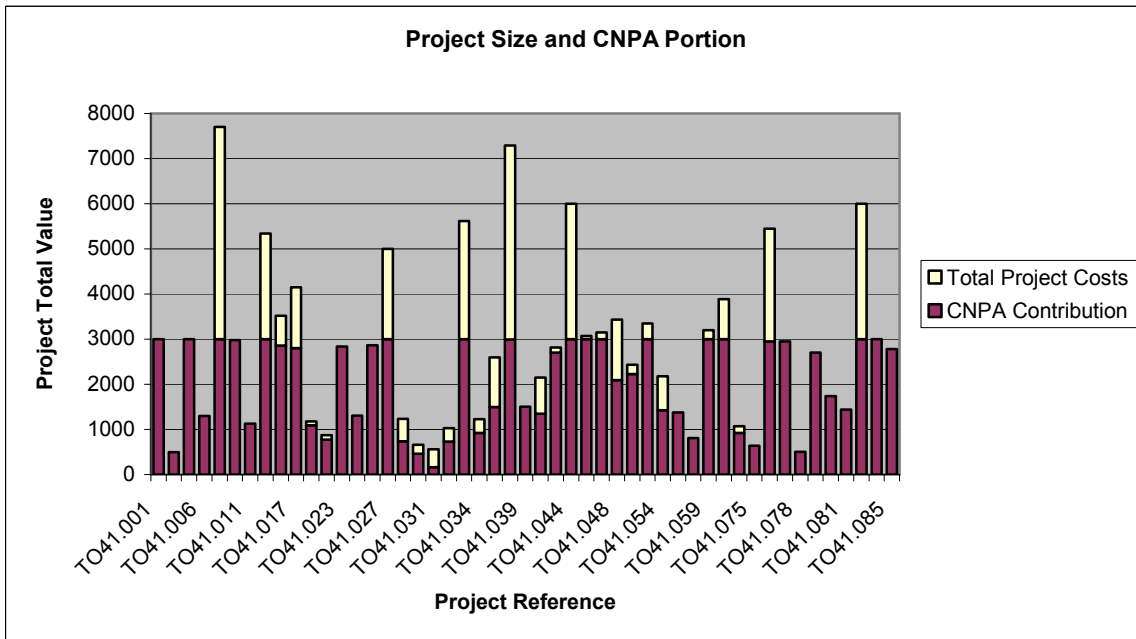
Appendix 5: Project Distribution Across the National Park



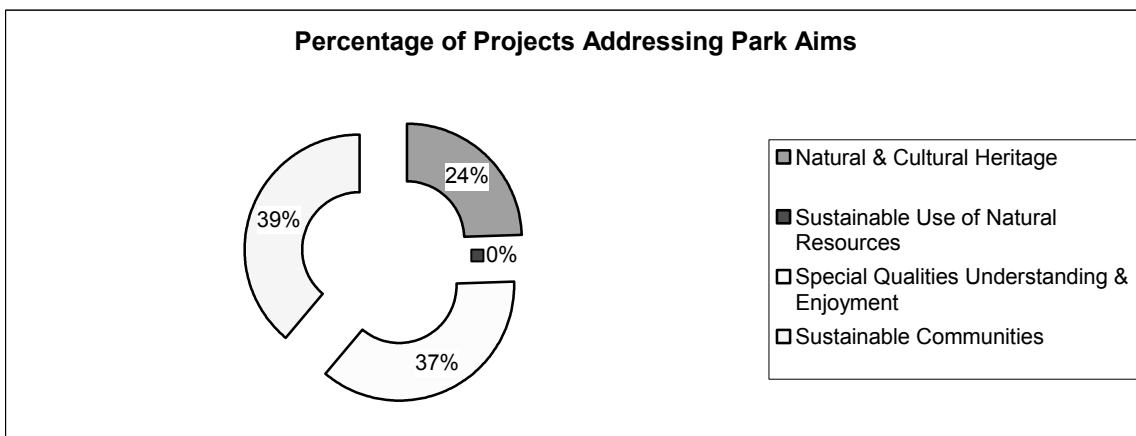
Appendix 6:



Appendix 7:



Appendix 8:



Appendix 9: Events & Activities Schedule

Ref	Event	Organisation	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
TO41.001	Carrbridge in Motion	Carrbridge Community Arts												
TO41.002	Out and About in the National Park	Newtonmore and District Floral Art club												
TO41.004	Uphill Ski Club Awareness and Promotion.	Uphill Ski Club												
TO41.006	Community Fun and Games Outdoor Fair	Logie Coldstone Welfare Trust Management Committee (LCWTMC)												
TO41.008	Garden Redevelopment	Grantown Play Group												
TO41.009	Patrick Geddes Project	Ballater (RD) Ltd												
TO41.011	Pantomime and Workshops	Newtonmore Drama Group												
TO41.013	Ceilidh's in the Cairngorms	DANNSA												
TO41.015	Gaelic Songs - a tribute to Donald Campbell	Kingussie Arts Network												
TO41.017	Tea in the Park	Glenlivet & Inveravon Community Association												
TO41.018	'Insh Village Rumpus'	Kincraig and Vicinity Community Council												
TO41.022	Generation Bowling Tournament	Tomintoul and GlenLivet Outdoor Bowling Club												
TO41.023	Living in the Park Art Competition	Society of Badenoch and Strathspey Artists												
TO41.025	Winter in the Park	RICHMOND MEMORIAL HALL												
TO41.026	Morlich Trail Orienteering	EQUAL ADVENTURE DEVELOPMENTS												

Appendix 10: SGS Budget

Income from funding partners	Funding offer	%	2004/5												Total Grant
			April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	
Cairngorms National Park Authority	55,000	55%	0	0	5,000	5,000		5,000		10,000	5,000	5,000	20,000		55,000
LEADER +	45,000	45%	0	0	0	0	18,252			10,000	5,000			11,748	45,000
Total	100,000	100%	0	0	5,000	5,000	18,252	5,000	0	20,000	10,000	5,000	20,000	11,748	100,000
Expenditure															
TO41.001 - Carrbridge in Motion	3,000	3%	1000				2000								3000
TO41.002 N'more & Dist Floral Art ...	500	0.50%							500						500
TO41.004 Uphill Ski Club	3,000	3%											3000		3000
TO41.006 LCWTMC	1,532	1.53%				510								787.09	1297.09
TO41.008 Grantown Playgroup	3,000	3%			1000									2000	3000
TO41.009 Patrick Geddes Project	2,980	2.98%			993									1986.6	2979.59
TO41.011 Newtonmore Drama Group	1228	1.02%						307						823	1130
TO41.013 DANNSA	3,000	3%						1000		2000					3000
TO41.015 Kingussie Arts Network	3,000				1000									1858.1	2858.13
TO41.017 Tea in the Pak	2800	2.80%						2800							2800
TO41.018 Insh Village Rumpus	1090.07	1.09%					525	565.07							1090.07
TO41.022 Generation Bowling Tourn...	770	0.77%						250				520			770
TO41.023 Living in the Park Art Comp	3000	3%				1000							1836.67		2836.67
TO41.025 Winter in the Park - RICHMOND MEMORIAL HALL	1950	1.95%					650							656.19	1306.19
TO41.026 Morlich Trail Orienteering,	2870	2.87%					950							1915	2865
TO41.027 Braemar Books Publication	2693	2.69%					900				2100				3000
TO41.028 CNP Open Texas Scramble	950	0.95%							735						735
TO41.029 Autumn Colour in the CNP	718.4	0.72%					240							218.13	458.13
TO41.031 Active Aboyne challenge	160.43	0%							160.43						160.43
TO41.032 Clova Hall 50th Anniversary	730	7.30%						730							730
TO41.033 Kingussie River Spey Perf..	3,000	3%					1000							2000	3000
TO41.034 Toulser Open Seminar	924	0.92%								300				624	924

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Paper 1 Annex 1 03/06/05

TO41.035 Grantown Try Tri	1494	1.59%						500						994	1494
TO41.038 Comhlan Luaidh Bhaid...	3000	3%						1000						1990.6	2990.62
TO41.039 Chainsaw Art competition	1500	2%						500						1002	1501.98
TO41.041 Juvenile Masons	1350	1%								450				900	1350
TO41.042 ShowBoaters	2700	3%						900		1800					2700
TO41.044 ABC Xmas event	3000	3%										1000		2000	3000
TO41.046 Laggan Walks	3000	3%							1000					2000	3000
TO41.047 3 in the Park Snowboard ...	3000	3%										1000		2000	3000
TO41.048 Railway Volunteers	2000	2%								667				1426.1	2093.06
TO41.049 Braes Hogmanay	2229.41	2%								820				1409.4	2229.41
TO41.052 Carrumba Workshop Series	3000	3%								909			2091		3000
TO41.054 Grantown Youth Project	3000	3%										567		859.23	1426.23
TO41.056 Graffiti Art and the Cairngorms Area	2010	2%							670					703.02	1373.02
TO41.057 Sport Any Way Braemar	1000	1%												807.21	807.21
TO41.059 Looking Back and Forward	3000	3%								1000				2000	3000
TO41.073 JMA Model Award	3000	3%							1000					2000	3000
TO41.074 Skate the Park	920	1%							307	613					920
TO41.075 Drumguish Dykers	693	1%							330			310.92			640.92
TO41.076 Cairngorms Crystals	2948.55	3%							1000					1948.6	2948.55
TO41.077 Squirrel Leaflet	2997.12	3%							1000					1951.8	2951.78
TO41.078 Cairngorm Capers	508	1%								170	334.31				504.31
TO41.079 There's more to Clova ...	2610.7	3%										870		1830.2	2700.15
TO41.080 Shinty in the Park	1930	2%								643				1094.8	1737.77
TO41.081 N'more Junior Curling Club	1420	1%								473				970	1443
TO41.082 Nethybridge Dam	3000	3%								1000				2000	2999.99
TO41.083 WADE Heritage Garden	3000	3%								1000				2000	3000
TO41.085 Dulnanin Bridge Windows ..	3000	3%								1000				1777.8	2777.84
Total (committed)		108%	1000	0	2993	1510	6265	8552.0	6702.4	12845	4001.3	2700.9	3927.67	49533	100030.14
Cash flow status (expected)			-1,000	-1,000	1,007	4,497	16,484	12,932	6,230	13,385	19,383	21,682	37,755	-30	