
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at The Victory Hall, Aboyne on Friday 3rd June 2005 at 1.30pm

PRESENT

Eric Baird
Stuart Black
Duncan Bryden
Basil Dunlop
Lucy Grant
Marcus Humphrey
Bruce Luffman
Eleanor Mackintosh
Anne MacLean
Alastair MacLennan

Sandy Park
Andrew Rafferty
Gregor Rimell
David Selfridge
Joyce Simpson
Sheena Slimon
Richard Stroud
Andrew Thin
Susan Walker

In Attendance:

David Cameron
Murray Ferguson
Patricia Hamilton
Dicken Higgins
Jane Hope
Fiona Newcombe
Gail Renwick
Shirley Tulloch

Apologies:

Sally Dowden
Douglas Glass
Angus Gordon
David Green
William McKenna
Bob Wilson

Welcome and Introduction

1. The Convenor welcomed everyone to the Board meeting.

Minutes of Last Meeting – approval

2. The minutes of the previous meeting (6th May 2005) were approved with no changes.

Matters Arising

3. The following points were raised:
 - a) Paragraph 8: A further Board paper on the Land Based Business Training Project was in hand for early 2006.
 - b) Paragraph 12: the Head of Economic and Social Development was actively considering a presentation to the Board by youth groups.
 - c) Paragraph 15(a): a paper on entry points signage would be brought to the Board in September with all the relevant information on design, cost, location, funding sources, to enable the Board to make a final decision.
 - d) Paragraph 15 (b): a full briefing and presentation had been given to Board Members on the 20th May. This had been followed by discussions between the Head of Visitors Services and Recreation and the directly elected members on how best to engage the Board in this project. A number of actions were proposed: Board Members would be informed of the dates of meetings of the Project Team, and would be welcome to attend; in addition a monthly written briefing would also be sent to Board Members. Finally, it was noted that life size mockup had now been made in cloth, and members were being invited to attend demonstration sessions on site to enable the proposed entry point marker to be assessed.
 - e) Paragraph 15 (c): staff had considered the process followed to date on the entry point marker project, and were content that this had been robust. A part of that process had been the briefing to Members on the 20th May; a note of that meeting had been circulated.
 - f) Paragraph 15(d): a short monthly update was being prepared for all Members and staff.

Grant Package for 2005 -06 and 2006 -07 (Paper 1)

4. Dicken Higgins introduced the paper which reported back on the Small Grants Scheme run in 2004 -05; proposed an approach for delivering grants during 05 -06 and 06 -07 and sought the Board's approval for the expenditure involved.
5. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) The investment of CNPA Programme funds totalled £315,000 - this comprised £155,000 in 05 -06 and £160,000 in 06 -07.
 - b) Applying for grants could be quite challenging for local communities, and it was suggested that publicising case studies could be a useful way of spreading good practice and encouraging uptake of these grant schemes. It was confirmed that in the first year of the CNPA's Grant Scheme some time had been put into sharing good practice with potential applicants. It was also suggested that in the new grant

scheme programme staff would be much more proactively involved in initiating and suggesting grant applications. The CNPA would also be working with SNH and other partners to use their networks to encourage uptake of the CNPA's scheme.

- c) It was important for the scheme to be user-friendly to applicants; in particular it was important that there should be a single point of contact. It was noted that in the first year of the grant scheme there had been many positive comments in this respect, and Dicken Higgins was congratulated for the very positive and helpful way in which he had dealt with applicants.
- d) The CNPA Grant Schemes should link in with the Highland Year of Culture 2007, which was receiving funding from the Scottish Executive and Highland Council.
- e) The first year of the grant scheme had been successful, but this might lead to over-demand in the coming year. In dealing with applications, the focus for making decisions on the award of grants would be based on how well a proposal delivered the goals set out in the CNPA Corporate Plan. But in so doing, the CNPA would also attempt to provide information on where else an applicant could apply for funding, with the aim of trying in due course to act as a one stop shop for the many different sources of grant available.
- f) The question was asked whether the 10% contribution required from communities could be a contribution in kind, through provision of labour for example, or whether this had to be cash. It was noted that in the previous year, finding a relatively small amount of cash had not generally been a major problem for communities; some people felt that providing cash was a stronger indication of commitment than some of the alternatives. Nevertheless, there were cases, for example building a community hall, where the provision of labour could amount to a significant contribution to a project. As currently proposed, the integrated grant scheme did not envisage provision of the 10% contribution in kind. However, given the range of views, it was suggested this should be investigated further as an option for the future.
- g) There should be a report on the grant scheme's performance in 05-06 before any changes were considered for the scheme in 06-07.
- h) It would be important to raise the awareness of the grant scheme, given that communities inevitably had to gear up to apply and it was already June. The danger of an underspend would need to be monitored closely.

6. The paper was approved as follows

- a) **The Board noted the successful outcome of the Small Grants Scheme in 2004-05, and congratulated all staff concerned in what had been a well run scheme with a high level of uptake**
- b) **The Board approved the approach to delivering grants during 05-06 and 06-07, with the proviso that there should be a report on the performance of the scheme in 05-06 before any changes would be considered for 06-07.**
- c) **The Board approved the expenditure of £315,000 on these grants over the next two years (05-06, and 06-07) subject to confirmation of approval by the Scottish Executive.**

7. Action:

- a) **Grant Scheme for 05-06 to run as proposed in the paper, with 10% contribution required in cash rather than in kind. Further consideration to be given on**

whether this should be changed for 06 -07. A report to be brought back to the Board on the outcome and conclusions of the 05 -06 grants scheme before any such changes were considered.

Corporate Plan Report: Theme 2 (paper 2)

8. Fiona Newcombe introduced the paper which informed the Board of progress and plans for achieving the second theme of the Corporate Plan for 2005 -2008 ("to promote sustainable resource, land and water management; and to protect and enhance our wildlife and landscapes").
9. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) In light of the morning's Planning Committee (at which it was agreed that the CNPA should write to an estate which had flouted the planning system, and also discuss at the Local authority planning Protocol Group a consistent way of dealing with such issues) it was suggested that the organisation should give some thought to whether or not there were adequate mechanisms at its disposal to deal with the protection of the heritage - both cultural and natural. The morning's proceedings had highlighted how important elements of our cultural heritage were singularly vulnerable if they were not listed, and planning rules were flouted.
 - b) The work being done with the Scottish Executive on developing land management contracts was crucial. It would be of great importance to the future of the area if land management contracts could be developed which were tailored to the needs of the Cairngorms.
 - c) The importance of moorlands must not be overlooked, given that they constituted 60% of the area of the National Park. It was noted that financial support for moorlands was a gap in the current suite of incentive schemes, and the CNPA were looking further into this with public agencies such as SNH in the context of their NNRs and Natural Care Scheme. The essential question was whether some of the current support incentives should be extended beyond the designated areas. The Cairngorms Moorland Project would come to an end in due course, but had been a very successful project, and officials were actively considering on how best to develop this project and build on everything that had been learnt. There would be a Board paper in September on taking forward this project.
 - d) Forestry policy would be a high priority for new staff, notably the revision of the Forestry Framework Paper, a Board paper was expected very soon on this.
 - e) The point was made that the recently announced revision to agricultural-environment payments by the Scottish Executive had been very damaging to farmers in the Cairngorms. The reduction in payments was being reviewed, but what was important was the message which such a review sent out to recipients, namely that there may be little security in grant schemes. In working with the Scottish Executive to set up the principles behind land management contracts, it would be important to build in something about security of payment rates, notably setting up clear procedures and processes for dealing with proposed changes.
 - f) One of the strands to the Integrated Grant Scheme was the LBAP and the question was asked whether communities were sufficiently well aware of this strand to the grant scheme, which was part funded by the Local Authorities and SNH. It was pointed out that the LBAP (Local Biodiversity Action Plan) Project Officer had a role in liaising with community councils and raising awareness of the grants

available. It was noted that the Project Officer should liaise closely with CNPA Board Members, particularly those who were likely to be going to community council meetings. A short briefing paper on what communities needed to know about applying for grants would be extremely helpful. At the same time, it would be helpful if the Project Officer himself could get out to some of the community council meetings.

- g) It was noted that there were important links between some of the work in this Corporate Plan Theme and the work on tourism - close liaison between the Natural Resources Group and the Economic and Social Development Group was particularly important to reinforce this.
- h) One of the great strengths of the LBAP Project was its potential to involve a lot of members of the general public in conservation. The Small Grants Scheme could do a lot to demystify the jargon and the science associated with Biodiversity, and it was hoped that significant amounts of effort could be put into publicising the grant scheme as well as the LBAP.
- i) Given its geographical spread of members, the CNPA had a huge opportunity to raise the profile of work such as the LBAP and the associated grant schemes for helping to deliver this. The CNPA had members at virtually all the community council meetings across the National Park, providing a tremendous opportunity to raise levels of awareness. Work to develop the CNPA's approach to landscape and wild land was high up the agenda for when additional staff arrived. The main thrust for this work would be through the National Park Plan. The work to deliver this theme in the Corporate Plan would continue to be a mixture of long-term strategic work on land management contracts, forestry incentives, and upland management, at the same time as highly visible work on immediate delivery of smaller projects through grants schemes; a mixture of long-term strategy on the one hand, and short-term deliverables on the other.

AOCB

- 10. The Convenor announced that the CNPA had entered a team into the Highland Cross, and were looking for sponsorship to raise money for a number of charities.

Date of Next Meeting

- 11. Friday the 1st of July at the Village Hall, Nethy Bridge.