
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: Update on the Cairngorms National Park Website

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Purpose

To inform the Board of progress made in merging the CNPA corporate website with the Park portal and its launch date.

Recommendations

That the Board note the new Park website will go live week commencing 8th August 2011.

Executive Summary

The Cairngorms National Park portal developed to deliver a customer-oriented website about the Park that meets the needs of visitors, residents and others has been merged with our existing corporate website www.cairngorms.co.uk. The new Park website provides much more information about the Park aimed at a wide range of interests which aims to meet the needs of visitors, residents, land managers, students and researchers and others. It acts as a web-base point of entry which provides easy access to information about the Park either directly or indirectly via other websites such as www.visitcairngorms.com.

This new website will go live week commencing 8th August 2011 and will be promoted with our partners and other interested parties to gain their views and comments. A formal launch or promotional campaign will not be carried out as the website name has not changed and the site will provide the main mechanism for the National Park Plan and Local Development Plan Main Issues Report consultation later this year which will raise the profile of the new site with anyone who has an interest in the Park.

UPDATE ON THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. In 2003, when the National Park was established a website was created for the CNPA which focused on the work of the Park Authority but also provided some general information about the Park and its special qualities.
2. In the National Park Plan 2007-2012 it was recognised that the Park needs a high profile, inspirational presence on the web which raises the profile and promotes the Park and its special qualities and allows people with a range of interests in the Park to find information quickly and easily – especially visitors. As stated in the National Park Plan an action was included to:
 - a) *Develop a customer-oriented website about the Park that meets the needs of visitors, residents and others, acting as an entry level portal to other websites.*
(Action 4a Priority for Action on Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park)
3. In July 2008, following discussion at the relevant Advisory Forum, the Board agreed that the most viable option to achieve this outcome was to develop a modest ‘portal’ website to direct people to the relevant information and complement it where necessary. A phased approach was recommended, initially working to meet the priority need to improve the information available to visitors with subsequent phases looking at information needs for local residents, education and research, conservation and land management. Ultimately the primary objective was to provide the best possible online experience for ‘users’ of the Cairngorms National Park website.
4. At the same time, Aviemore and the Cairngorms DMO launched a visitor facing website in which provided a good service for visitors wanting to book their accommodation and plan their visit in the ACDMO area. Similar websites were also available for visitors to Royal Deeside, Glenlivet, Tomintoul, Angus Glens and Highland Perthshire. It was envisaged that the Park-portal would bring these various websites together for the benefit of visitors and others interested in the Park.
5. The Park web-portal was developed which acted as an orientation site bringing together information on **visiting and enjoying** the Park, **living and working** in the Park with information for residents, businesses and local communities, **learning** aimed at teachers, students and researchers, **looking after** the Park aimed at people interested in the conservation activities underway in the Park, **managing** the Park which brings together the work of all the partners involved in delivering the National Park Plan including the CNPA. The site also delivered key messages about the Park and highlighted the **special qualities** of the Park, how people can **get involved** and **Park News**.
6. However, a significant step in bringing together a Park-wide approach to promoting and marketing the Park was achieved when the Cairngorms Business Partnership was formed in early 2010. This resulted in the CBP extending the ACDMO visitor

website to cover the whole of the Park resulting in the visitcairngorms.com website being launched in April 2010.

7. The new Cairngorms National Park portal went 'live' using the URL name www.cairngorms-online.co.uk in September 2010 linking to the www.visitcairngorms.com website as the official visitor oriented website for the Park. It was not actively promoted to allow the site to be tested and invite feedback from a list of 'critical friends' including Board members. The response was largely positive and we received a number of helpful suggestions for improvement, however, there were two main points of concern:
 - a) There was some duplication between the CNPA website and the Park Portal as well as overlap with other websites in particular the Cairngorms Business Partnership's visitor website www.visitcairngorms.com site; and
 - b) Launching a new Park Portal with a new URL link would need considerable effort and resource to raise its 'profile' with search engines and potential 'users'. It would also need to compete with existing well established websites – in particular our own site www.cairngorms.co.uk .
8. Consequently, Management Team agreed in January 2011 that rather than promote the Park portal as www.cairngormsonline.co.uk we would merge the CNPA website with the content of Park Portal and jointly present them as an improved Park website using our existing URL www.cairngorms.co.uk .
9. This work is now complete and will go live as a website for the Cairngorms National Park which includes a section on the CNPA week commencing 8th August 2011. As the new site will continue to use the CNPA URL domain name www.cairngorms.co.uk our current 'users' as well as anyone who is currently linked to our site can find us as before.

Consultation

10. Work on the Park Portal involved considerable consultation with a wide range of interested parties and feedback received once the site went live last September has resulted in the portal being merged with the CNPA website. We are continuing to work closely with the Cairngorms Business Partnership and VisitScotland to ensure that the visitor information section does not duplicate effort or compete with existing websites and will consider other areas of collaborative working as the site develops further.

Policy Context

11. In the National Park Plan 2007-2012 it was recognised that the Park needs a high profile, inspirational presence on the web which raises the profile and promotes the Park and its special qualities and allows people with a range of interests in the Park to find information quickly and easily – especially visitors. As stated in the National Park Plan an action was included to:
12. *Develop a customer-oriented website about the Park that meets the needs of visitors, residents and others, acting as an entry level portal to other websites. (Action 4a Priority for Action on Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park)*

Delivering Sustainability

13. Development of the site will be delivered through a partnership approach where the needs of both the private and public sector (and potentially the voluntary sector as well) can be met in a joined up way, maximising the best use of our combined available resources and expertise and avoiding duplication of effort or the potential for conflicting information.
14. By working in partnership it is also possible to provide a more cost effective way of having a web-presence which enjoys a high 'ranking' on website search engines and to deliver e-services (including social media) which can be shared by all partners involved in delivering the National Park Plan. This could include local communities and communities of interest as well as voluntary organisations who may not have the resources to get the best out of websites or e-services.

Delivering A Park for All

15. The new Cairngorms National Park website provides much more information about the Park aimed at a wide range of interests to meet the needs of visitors, residents, land managers, students and researchers and others. It acts as a web-base point of entry which provides easy access to information about the Park either directly or indirectly via other websites such as www.visitcairngorms.com .

Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency

16. Considerable efficiency savings will be made in terms of hosting, maintenance, development and content management fees which would have been associated with a Park-portal.
17. It also avoids confusion to web 'users' (which another new website could create) and will maximise the 'traffic' on www.cairngorms.co.uk as well as saving both effort and resources needed to promote a new website about the Park.

Implications

Financial Implications

18. Savings are expected to be made in the hosting, maintenance and content management of the site which will allow us to invest in further online functionality and content to both raise the profile of the site and provide a better web-user experience that meets their needs and expectations.

Presentational Implications

19. As we are not launching a new URL domain name but are expanding the content provided through our existing website no launch or promotional activity is planned. However, we will be promoting the new and improved site with our partners and other interested parties and the website will provide the main response mechanism for the National Park Plan and Local Development Plan Main Issues Report consultation which will run from 19th September – 9th December this year.

Implications for Stakeholders

20. There should be no implications for stakeholders as we are not changing the URL domain name and existing links both to and from the site have been thoroughly tested and should be unaffected.

Next Steps

21. Over the course of this financial year we will gradually take on full responsibility for managing the content of the site rather than use an external supplier. This will save money and will allow us to use this experience to increase our skills across the organisation in writing for the web and using the web and social media tools to meet our communication objectives. Members of staff will take on responsibility for different sections of the website and, following appropriate training, will be able to directly update information. We will take a phased approach to move towards this goal and a proposed training programme has been agreed with HR. In addition, a website strategy and social media policy are being prepared which will clarify what the aims and objectives are for the site and how these tools should be used to meet our organisational needs. This will form part of a bigger review of our digital capabilities and in particular our data and record management systems.

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