

**MINUTE of MEETING of the
NATIONAL PARK PLAN WORKING GROUP
held in the Laggan Village Hall
on 7TH November 2003 at 9am**

PRESENT

Peter Argyle	CNPA Board
Duncan Bryden	CNPA Board
Nick Halfhide	CNPA Staff
Angus Gordon	CNPA Board
David Green	CNPA Board
Susan Walker	CNPA Board

In Attendance:

Basil Dunlop	CNPA Board
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Welcome and Apologies

1. Nick Halfhide welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that there were no apologies.

Selection of Chairman

2. Duncan Bryden was proposed by Peter Argyle and seconded by Sue Walker. There were no other candidates. Duncan Bryden accepted the Chairmanship.

Discussion of Group's purpose in the short term

3. The Chair asked Nick Halfhide to briefly outline the obligation on the Park Authority to produce the National Park Plan, and then the broad outline agreed by the Board at their meeting in Edzell on 12th September 2003.
4. Following this introduction, the Group had a wide ranging discussion on the broad approach already adopted by the Board, and how best to take this forward. The Group made the following points:
 - It is very important to engage with the main external partners in this exercise at the highest level as soon as possible to ensure that they are signed up to the process agreed by the Board, and are willing to contribute resources to making the Park Plan a success. This includes securing a senior contact in each organisation who is empowered to assist the Authority. This vehicle for this may be the Advisory Panel on Joined-Up Government as agreed by the Board on 12th September 2003.
 - We need to have greater clarity on the relationship between the Park Plan, the Park Local Plan and the structure plans for covering the National Park. The Group was concerned that unless the relationship is clear, we may face difficulties during appeals

against planning decisions and it would also be confusing for our partners and the general public.

- We need to identify the current and projected spend by the different parts of the public sector and what level of services or activity this provides. This will be an important element of the Park Plan, and also necessary if the public sector is to bid for more funds to improve the level of service or activities within the Park.
 - We discussed whether the plan should be topic or customer focused. For example should its main headings be Woodlands, Moorlands, and Agriculture and so on, or should it be focused on for example communities, businesses and visitors and the sustainable use of natural products, recreation, and wildlife.
 - We need a scoping process including one or more diagrams showing how the National Park Plan process fits in with other planning processes and over what timescale.
 - It would be helpful to have examples of Park Plans from elsewhere, both in the UK and abroad.
 - We need to consider the shape of the final product and how it might be presented to range of audiences. For example should we have a Park Plan written for young people, and/or a video showing our plans for the next five years?
5. It was agreed that the Chair would meet with Nick Halfhide to reflect on the actions to take forward.

Identification of external interest to join the Group

6. There was some discussion on how to include external interests without making the Group too large. It was suggested that we could have individuals to represent each of the three elements of sustainability, ie economic, social, and environmental interests. It was also suggested that we invite someone from the Scottish Executive to represent a national perspective, as well as to make sure that the product that we are developing is in line with Minister's wishes.
7. Overall it was agreed that it was too early to decide, and that this decision would benefit from a period of reflection.

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8. Sue Walker noted that the landscape character assessment for the Cairngorms is now out of date and was largely focused on natural aspects of the landscape. She suggested that as part of the Park Plan process it would be useful to have a new landscape report based on much broader landscape characteristics. She considered that this would be useful integrating tool for the Park Plan.

Date of next Meeting

9. The Group decided to postpone agreeing another date until the Chair had had a meeting with Nick Halfhide.

The meeting closed at 10.15am