

## MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING of

### THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

held via Lifesize  
on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022 at 1pm

#### PRESENT

Xander McDade (Board Convener)                      Gaener Rodger (Planning Committee Convener)  
Carolyn Caddick (Board Deputy Convener)      Deirdre Falconer (Resources Committee Chair)  
Judith Webb (Audit & Risk Committee Chair)

#### In Attendance:

Grant Moir, CEO  
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services  
Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development  
Oliver Davies, Head of Communications  
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

**Apologies:**                      William Munro (Performance Committee Chair)

#### Welcome and Apologies

1. Carolyn Caddick welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Governance Committee.

#### Declarations of Interest

2. There were no interests declared.

#### Minutes of Previous Meetings & Matters Arising

3. The minutes of the previous meeting, 11 February 2022, held via video conferencing were approved with no amendments.
4. **Action points arising from previous meeting:**
  - a) **At Para 12i) In Hand**– an online questionnaire identifying gaps in knowledge to be created for Board Members to complete ahead of further training.
  - b) **At Para 12ii) Open** – complaints procedure and its process to be incorporated into the training session in June 2022.
  - c) **At Para 17i) In Hand**– Head of Communications to look into using Speysound Radio to promote events in the National Park.
  - d) **At Para 22i) Closed** – Board Code of Conduct circulated to David Robertson of WildThinking.
  - e) **At Para 26i) Open** – Board members representation on external/ internal groups to be sought.
  - f) **At Para 26ii) Closed** – Board schedule updated and circulated to the Board.

- g) **Confidential Minute At Para 5i) Closed**– Clerk to the Board ensured that going forward subsequent Committee meetings are not held in the same Lifesize room as the last, to mitigate from delaying the start time of Committees.

5. **Action Point Arising: None.**

**Communications Update (Paper 1)**

6. Olly Davies, Head of Communications, presented an update of current communications activity, plus outlined a number of key priorities for the next quarter. The Cairngorms 2030 Heritage Horizon's video was highlighted in particular as one of the key items delivered over the last period:  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqPtAlikiiXfKXXbjhF83Uh8KzAXppima>
7. The Governance Committee discussed the update and made the following comments and observations:
- a) Question around the newsletter idea, would it be digital or in paper format or both? Head of Communications advised that it would be in paper format and that the commonplace platform would be used to roll out feedback digitally. Facebook (FB), Instagram (IG) and website would also be used.
  - b) Question around if we already do FB and IG how will this channel differ as a digital management campaign? Head of Communications advised that lots of people don't see our channel with an interest in hiking, going out for walks, can target them even if they don't follow CNPA channels, chance to reach those we are not reaching through organic activity.
  - c) Praise for the 340k social media hits on Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend.
  - d) Comment made that having more and differing local people involved this will intrigue residents who then will want to know what's going on. Head of Communications agreed that it would, though only if the characters were of a range of backgrounds and ages. He added that the Cairngorms Voices piece would be on the front and centre of the website.
  - e) Could Board members share the link with our Partners who may also in turn share the links? Head of Communications advised that Cairngorms Voices was commissioned in partnership with VisitScotland, he explained that when there was more momentum behind them there would be more opportunities to engage and help disseminate information and links at that point.
  - f) How would commonplace be used as a platform going forward? Head of Communications advised that it would be used for the Heritage Horizons project and the active travel project. There is a commonplace element in the e-biking project which would have the same feel and look as the NPPP Consultation. He explained that commonplace was a delivery vehicle which should be ready within the next month and at that point would be shared with the Board.
  - g) Congratulations and comment made that the work being done within the Communications department was looking fresh and dynamic, how could this progress be shared with Members of the Board who are not on this Committee? Head of Communications advised that he was trying to pull the information provided to this Committee into the quarterly CEO Report that is prepared for

the Board, he added that further relevant information would be pulled into the Board e-bulletin which would be rolled out soon.

- h) CEO commented that it was worth highlighting to Board Members the breadth of work being undertaken by the Communications team and that the Board e-bulletin would help to do this.
  - i) Head of Communications explained that Sian Jamieson, Digital Communications Officer, had done a massive amount of work and had decided to go freelance. Although the recruitment process had begun to fill the role, this would mean that there would be delay to some priorities.
  - j) Deputy Convener praised the report and acknowledged the vast amount of work going on and handed back to Xander McDade, Board Convener, to Chair the meeting.
8. Xander McDade, Board Convener thanked Board Deputy Convener. He praised the good work being done within the Communications team, the extensive response to the NPPP Consultation and the impressive performance in delivering the communications agenda. He noted Communications would be reported to the Performance Committee on a regular basis.
11. **The Governance Committee noted the significant progress made across a range of communications channels in the past six months and discussed the identified priorities for Q3 of 2022.**
12. **Action Point Arising:**
- i. **Communications Update paper to be brought to a future meeting of the Performance Committee.**

### **Board Skills Matrix & Board Appointment Process Update (Oral)**

13. Xander McDade, Board Convener provided an update on the Board Appointment process. The following points were made:
- a) Slowly getting nominees from the five local Authorities for their 7 nominees to Minister for approval, although the information is informal, and the CEO has not been formally notified of them yet.
  - b) Response on ministerial appointments awaited from the Minister, which will play heavily on skills matrix discussion. Noted that by end of this year potentially up to 8 of current members may change, with up to 6 Local Authority nominated changing and possibly 2 ministerial appointments.

*Judith Webb arrived at the meeting.*

14. Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development provided an update on the draft board skills matrix which would be used to identify any additional skills needed in delivery of the new NPPP. This would be seen by the Resources Committee that afternoon, then go out to Board via survey monkey next week. The intention was to leave it running for 2 weeks, then to bring the analytics back to this Committee.
15. The Committee discussed the update on the Board Skills Matrix and made the following comments and observations:

- a) Resources Committee Vice-Chair advised that it should come back to the Resources Committee for discussion and to the Governance Committee for information.
- b) Suggestion made to repeat the skills matrix again next year when new Board members are in place. Board Convener confirmed that it would be carried out again, this time next year.
- k) Query around the public appointments process for ministerial appointees, and whether proposed appointments may be made with individuals not taking up the role for several months until vacancies arose? Noted that this may be a possibility, although only likely for relatively short-term periods of one or two months. Where the gap was six months or more, it is much more likely that a separate appointments round would be undertaken.
- l) Comment made that the locally elected members will be on board by this time next year. Governance Committee Chair added that they would be advertising jointly with Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) for public appointees and that there would be another opportunity next year to fill in any skill gaps with more Scottish Government appointments joining the Board at that point.
- m) Director of Corporate Services added that he had had discussions with LLTNP and Scottish Government around public appointees. With one public appointment definitely coming to an end at the end of January 2023, it was likely this recruitment would be covered in a 2022 appointment round with a separate round of appointments held in early 2023. The timeline for the 2022 appointment process was becoming urgent to resolve approach and requirements.

**16. The Governance Committee noted the update.**

**17. Action Point Arising:**

- i. **Board Skills matrix survey monkey questionnaire to be repeated in June 2023.**

**Board Training & Development Update (Oral)**

18. Carolyn Caddick, Board Deputy Convener presented the update on Board training and Development. She highlighted the following points:
- a) David Robertson has sent notes on, will the Deputy Convener review and respond to, and once agreed will circulate to the whole board.
  - b) Comment made that Board Members attending by VC found it challenging. Members considered that the sooner the Authority moves to MS Teams and issued with proper laptops, the better VC participation will become. There was discussion around smaller meetings being online and then discussion for Planning Committee being wholly online rather than hybrid.
  - c) Comment made that have seen a shift where some people who previously want to attend meetings in person now want to attend virtually.
  - d) Comment made that good feedback had been received from members on the training events.

- e) Planning Committee Convener advised that she and the Planning Committee Deputy Convener had made a commitment to come into office for Planning Committee meetings, which provided a different dynamic rather than being on own attending by VC, and they would still continue to come in. It was noted that if a site visit was required it would need to take place the afternoon before the meeting.
- f) Suggestion made that a planning Committee site visit could even take place on a separate Board Day, even a couple of weeks before the Planning Committee meeting the application in question was being determined at.
- g) Planning Committee Convener added that new Board members joining would undergo Planning Committee training prior to sitting on the Committee and this training would be open to all members should any wish a refresher. This point of open access to board induction training was Agreed for all induction training not just planning training.
- h) Recognition that the timetabling for board sessions had been challenging, with a backlog of items still to be added to the schedule.
- i) Board Deputy Convener gave a brief description of the action points that had come from the Board Effectiveness workshop:
  - i. meeting protocols to be developed and face to face meetings for board sessions preferred
  - ii. opportunities for discussions with Scottish Government and Agencies, scheduling time what we want to cover as hot topics and feed into that
  - iii. Set up a Board WhatsApp group for sharing articles.
  - iv. Before we do anything on that, David Robertson to circulate the action points via the Clerk to the Board.
  - v. Those who weren't there may want to ask questions and suggestion made to bring it to a Board Business session to discuss and agree in the future.
- j) Head of Organisational Development reported that she had had a catch-up with David Robertson of WildThinking on how to develop the momentum of the training. He is willing to take part, to share findings from the day, and doesn't want anyone to feel on the periphery. Members were asked if they had an appetite for that. There was also an opportunity to do something with Officers and Board on expectations and for a follow up session with the full board taking in new board members. Board Convener agreed it would be useful to have another session to include new Board members and senior officers in May 2023.
- k) Director of Corporate Services advised that the intention was that all Board members would be required to attend governance training which would cover Code of Conduct, culture of the organisation and of the Board to reinforce what has been discussed.
- l) Planning Committee Convener added that she would pick up with Head of Strategic Planning ahead of any new board member Planning Committee induction training to open it up to existing members as a refresher.
- m) Board Convener advised that new members would have focussed inductions and Head of Strategic Planning and Clerk to the Board would be involved.
- n) Suggestion made to bring risk appetite training early in the induction, to provide a shared understanding of risk appetite and where we are as an Authority. Agreed to build into governance training.
- o) Agreed the need to find 1 hour with Board in the schedule to share the feedback on the Board Effectiveness session, agree the actions and set to action them.

19. **The Governance Committee noted the update and agreed:**
- a) **Planning Committee induction training would be opened up to existing Board members to attend as a refresher.**
  - b) **Second Board Effectiveness Session with the Board and Senior Staff facilitated by David Robertson of WildThinking for May 2023.**
  - c) **Risk and Risk Appetite training to be incorporated into mandatory induction Governance Training for Board members.**
  - d) **One hour of time with the Board to be found to schedule time to agree the actions from the Board Effectiveness session on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022.**

20. **Action Point Arising:**

- i. **As detailed in paragraphs 19a-d.**

**Board Representation on External Groups Update (Oral)**

21. Xander McDade, Chair, presented the update on Board Representation on External Groups. He highlighted the following points:
- a) Has spoken to board members and waiting to see the outcome of council nominations before moving anyone around.
  - b) Had discussions with external partners, about board representation, met with Cairngorms Business Partnership and agreed having a Board member attending their meetings as an observer was not very useful. Instead, Board Convener and Deputy Convener will meet with their chair/ vice chair and CEOs 6-monthly.
  - c) Board Convener and Deputy Convener had met with Alex Hogg, Chair of Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA), and CEO joined the meeting. Feedback from SGA was that lots of misconceptions had been dispelled.
  - d) Board Convener had had a meeting with the Chair of Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS), CEO of OATS, Director of Planning & Place and Janet Hunter. Remain unconvinced at the benefits of having one of our Board members on their Board but agreed to continue with Janet as an OATS board member at moment. Not much going on in CNP with OATS activity and not very relevant for Board member time and resource and staff supporting the Board. Resource intensive involvement if we not getting much out of it.
22. The Board Convener agreed to bring some proposals on direction headed with Board representation on external groups to the next meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022.
23. **The Governance Committee noted the update.**
24. **Action Point Arising:**
- i. **Board Convener to bring some proposals on direction headed with board representation on external groups to the next meeting on 12th August 2022.**

## **Palladium Project and Partnership Update (Oral)**

25. Motion to take this item in confidential session due to it being commercially sensitive in nature.

## **AOCB**

26. The Convener provided the following updates:
  - a) Scottish Government released their resources spending review the day before. CEO added that this had been at portfolio level. Main news to come out of it is that it was likely to be a flat cash settlement next year for resource and an uplift on capital funding however there was no detail yet. If there was flat cash the Authority will have to absorb the financial consequences of the pay bill increase while the increase of capital helps a bit on overall financial management. It will still be normal budget round for 2022/23. The Scottish budget will be announced in December 2022.
  - b) There would be a debate in Parliament on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June on the new National Parks.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

27. The next meeting of the Governance Committee will take place on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022.
28. The meeting finished at 14.35hours.