
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: CAIRNGORMS GREEN RECOVERY FUND

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Purpose

This paper summarises delivery of the Cairngorms Green Recovery Fund in 2020-21 (Phase 1) and 2021-22 (Phase 2).

Recommendations

That the Board:

- a) **Note the success of Phase 1 of the Green Recovery Fund, which was delivered in partnership with the Cairngorms Trust in 2020-21 to support communities and businesses in their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- b) **Note the progress to date with delivery of Phase 2 of the Fund which is ongoing and all projects are scheduled for completion by the end March 2022.**

Executive Summary

1. CNPA approved the Cairngorms Green Recovery Plan in July 2020. One key element of that Plan was for CNPA to work in partnership with the Cairngorms Trust to establish a Green Recovery Fund (GRF).
2. The purpose of the Fund was to support the recovery of the Cairngorms National Park, its communities and businesses from the impacts of COVID 19. Four guiding principles for the projects to be supported by Fund were agreed:
 - a) **Green** – projects should contribute to strengthening the natural and social capital of the Park;
 - b) **Cairngorms** – projects should be Cairngorms National Park-focused and contribute to the outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan;
 - c) **Partnership** – applicants should work in partnership with others to deliver projects, focused on green recovery, well-being and economic growth; and
 - d) **Employment** – Projects should endeavour to maximise their contribution to local employment and impact on the National Park.

Green Recovery Fund: Phase 1

3. Phase 1 was launched in August 2020 for projects to be completed by the end of March 2021. The funding comprised £100k from CNPA and £30k from the

Cairngorms Trust. The Fund was promoted widely on social media, by press release and through direct contact with potential applicants.

4. A total of 27 project applications were received. All of the applications were assessed in a two-stage process against an agreed set of evaluation criteria. First, the projects were scored by an internal evaluation panel comprising officers of CNPA and the Cairngorms Trust. The Trust also identified those projects that matched their charitable objectives. Then the package of recommendations from officers was referred to an external panel to make the final decisions, chaired by CNPA Board member Willie Munro and comprising representatives of Cairngorms Nature Steering Group, Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey and the Marr Area Partnership and the Cairngorms Business Partnership.
5. A total of 13 projects were financially supported. A full list of the projects supported is provided at **Annex 1**.
6. Key highlights from the programme included:
 - a) The project to provide a welcome for camper-vans, prepared by the Cairngorms Business Partnership, was a significant success, producing a [Camper Van leaflet and interactive website page](#) that was launched in time for the 2021 summer season. The resources sign-posted visitors to the managed facilities throughout the Park and encouraged responsible behaviour, including disposal of waste in an appropriate manner.
 - b) In Braemar, the contribution from the Fund allowed the community to take ownership of small area of mature coniferous woodland within the village and improve the network of paths with nature trail and benches.
 - c) In Kingussie, Caberfeidh Horizons, an innovative social enterprise with a wide-ranging programme of activity at the heart of the community, used the funds to strengthen their staff base at key time in their development.
 - d) The Fund helped deliver 4km of riparian restoration at the River Truim, Crubenmore including a macro-invertebrate survey which will help assess the quality of the river habitat.
7. Feedback was also given to unsuccessful applicants. The most common reason for refusal of grant aid was the challenge that the project outcomes could be delivered in the relatively short period of time available.

Green Recovery Fund: Phase 2

8. A staff-led review of Phase 1 was undertaken and fresh proposals were developed for Phase 2 of the Fund in the year 2021/22. The overall objectives of the scheme were maintained but the evaluation criteria and process were simplified.
9. More funding was made available; in Phase 2 there was a total budget of £300k, comprising £250k from the CNPA and £50k from the Cairngorms Trust. The scheme was able to be launched much earlier in the year, giving the projects a considerably longer period for delivery.
10. 37 project applications were received for Phase 2 and 28 were financially supported. Once again, there was good geographic coverage of projects across the National Park. A full list of the projects supported is provided at **Annex 2**.

11. In Phase 2 every project was assigned a dedicated project liaison officer who the project leaders could contact directly with questions, queries etc. This was a two-way process and provided early warning of any possible emerging issues in order that they can be picked up promptly. A consolidated project management sheet is updated by all staff involved in liaison and a traffic light system is in place to flag any emerging issues.
12. A condition of funding also now requires each project to submit regular progress reports. The first reports were received in September and the next is due in mid-December 2021. The report templates are short and straightforward. Projects report any key milestones achieved in the reporting period and invited to provide ongoing material (images, videos, quotes) that demonstrate progress and celebrate project successes.
13. There was a greater diversity of projects supported through Phase 2 of the Fund. Key highlights from the programme so far have included:
 - a) The Aviemore ice rink has catalysed community action and been very popular, exceeding the expectations set out in the business plan. The project has built the confidence of the Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust and developed a key new facility for young people in the community at a challenging time.
 - b) Six communities took up the offer of funding to buy their own litter picking equipment and have gone on to develop their own volunteer programmes.
 - c) A project to build on the Badenoch Great Place Project which has now ended using traditional music and storytelling to build a story-telling culture in the area and to lead into Scotland's Year of Stories 2022.
 - d) A project led by Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust to pick up on the new Tomintoul and Glenlivet Dark Skies Park and develop a key interpretation facility at the Discovery Centre in Tomintoul.
 - e) A project led by the charity Countryside Learning Scotland to build connections between schools, local land-managers and employers and to develop relevant skills amongst young people in the Park.

Conclusions

14. Phase 2 of the programme is still being delivered and progress reports are expected very soon. It is expected that all projects will be complete by the end of March 2022. Some projects have reported slower progress than originally anticipated with the main causes cited related to supply chains (i.e. shortage of materials) and recruitment of staff/contractors taking longer than expected. To date, nearly half of the funding has been claimed, including a number of advance payments, allowing expenditure and delivery to commence without causing cash-flow difficulties for the lead bodies.
15. Overall, the Fund has proved extremely popular and has seen the delivery of a very good variety of projects all across the National Park. The lessons learned both at CNPA and at the Cairngorms Trust, will be useful as the community-managed grant scheme is developed as part of the Heritage Horizon: Cairngorms 2030 Project.

Jackie Farquhar and Murray Ferguson
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Annex I: Green Recovery Projects (Phase I) Supported in 2020/21

Applicant	Project
Aboyne and Upper Deeside Rotary Club	Litter picking in Upper Deeside
Blair Atholl and Area Tourism Association	Blair Atholl Community and Business Development project
Dee District Salmon Fishery Board	Glen Muick Woodland Connectivity
Spey Catchment Initiative	River Truim Riparian Planting
Caberfeidh Horizons	Building on Our Strengths
Boat of Garten Community Hall	COVID 19 recovery and Green Events
Cairngorms Business Partnership:	Building a sustainable welcome for camper-vans
Glenshee and Strathardle Tourist Association	Glenshee Visitor Centre improvements
Castle Roy Trust SCIO	Castle Roy's Covid Crisis
Growbiz Scotland	Supporting Creative Enterprise in the Cairngorms
RSPB	Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms
Braemar Community Ltd	Tomrichton Community Wood
Dalwhinnie Community Council	Ben Alder Road Car-park*

*Note: * Ben Alder Car Park project was withdrawn due to land ownership and legal issues that were only fully understood as planning for the project progressed.*

Annex 2: Green Recovery Projects (Phase 2) Supported in 2021/22

Applicant	Project
Boat of Garten Community Company	Woodland Wheels - construction of a pump track for bikes
Inverallan Church, Grantown	Inverallan 20/20 - Project officer to raise funding to deliver renovation of church for community benefit
Caberfeidh Horizons, Kingussie	Building on our Strengths - Community Food and Reuse/Repair Service
Castle Roy Trust, Nethy Bridge	Castle Roy's Toradh Uaine - complete final phase of infrastructure works so Castle can be opened for visitors
Victoria and Albert Halls Committee, Ballater	Delivering the Ballater Community and Heritage Hub - facilities within new community hub and creation of a hub manager post
Braemar Tourist Group	Litter picking equipment
David Ritchie and Sons Ltd, Aviemore	Food Waste and Biodegradable recycling - Creation of garbologist post to instigate use of new food waste facility
Badenoch Heritage (SCIO)	The Storylands Sessions - pilot the delivery of community music, storytelling, poetry and song events as part of Badenoch project legacy
Grantown Community Council	Litter picking equipment
Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust	Cairngorms Dark Sky Experience - Creation of a Dark Skies exhibition at the Tomintoul Discovery Centre
Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust	Aviemore Community Ice delivery of a community- owned seasonal covered recreational ice rink
Roots and Shoots Highland	Branching Out in Strathspey - deliver two branching out programmes in the Strath
The Grantown Business Association/Grantown Initiative	Activity to promote Grantown as a year-round destination
Countryside Learning Scotland	Pathways to Rural Work – youth skills initiative in the Park
Fiona's Wholefoods and Refills expansion, Grantown	Fiona's Wholefoods and Refills expansion - Renovation works to create a new frontage shop area at the YMCA
Green Health Partnership, Badenoch and Strathspey	Green Health Skills Development - build on the capacity of new health walk leaders and programme
Killiecrankie, Fincastle and Tummel Community Council	Litter picking equipment
Boat of Garten Community Hall	Setting up a Repair Café in the Boat of Garten Hall.
Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council	Litter picking equipment
Scottish Canoe Association	Loch Insh Launch Site Restoration - green engineering repair to riverbank at Loch Insh/ Kincaig for canoe access
Laggan Community Council	Litter picking equipment
Braemar Community Ltd	Auchtaven - Repair and improve the condition of the Queen Mother's picnic cottage

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Applicant	Project
Dulaig Park, Grantown Initiative	Dulaig Park Renovation - works towards the renovation and regeneration of the Park
Able2Adventure, Badaguish	All Ability Bike Hub - to develop all-abilities cycling initiative
Dalwhinnie Community Council	Litter picking equipment
Strathspey Camanachd Association	Our Shinty Legacy – equipment to develop youth participation at new shinty club in Strathspey
Nature Friendly Farming Network	Mob-grazing for Diversity – working with farmers to achieve sustainable grassland management through adaptive grazing management
Ardgeal Community Housing/ Badenoch Broadband CIC	Argeal – to help the community deliver superfast broadband at Ardgeal, near Kincaig