

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

FOR DISCUSSION

Title: COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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Purpose

This paper presents an update of current communications activity, plus outlines a number of key priorities for the next quarter. It complements recent board updates on our overall communications approach and results from the formal NPPP4 consultation.

Recommendations

The Governance Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the significant progress made across a range of communications channels in the past six months, and discuss the identified priorities for Q1 of 2022.**

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I. Key comms deliverables / achievements

<p>a. Websites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021, we reached 351,820 website sessions, a 7% increase on the 2020 figure and in line with growth from 2019 (but short of our 400k target). • A full audit of our website was conducted in November by accessibility experts DAC (Digital Accessibility Centre), including testing by users with a range of disabilities. The audit was complementary about a number of elements of the site; however, specific issues were flagged around third-party plugins to the site (mapping, forms etc.) which do not meet the latest accessibility guidelines, pdf downloads not always being screenreader accessible, and images needing easier to understand alternative text. We will be working through these findings with our web developers over the coming months, and tackling larger-scale recommendations as part of the new website project later in the year. • As part of our Wee Walks Week promotion in October, we launched a new interactive map containing all the trails from our suite of community path leaflets. We plan to expand this resource over the coming months to include further routes across the National Park, including accessible trails. • A new website for the Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend is being worked up over the coming months in time for the first in-person programme for two years. The new site will be fully mobile responsive and accessible, and will provide a more straightforward mechanism to promote the variety of events hosted by CNPA and partners.
<p>b. Social media and blogs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We reached 72,300 followers across 3 Facebook pages, 1 Instagram account, 1 LinkedIn account and 5 Twitter accounts. This was an increase of 50% on the previous year. This growth can be attributed to focusing on building our Instagram and LinkedIn audiences, including reaching our end of year goal of 10,000 followers on Instagram. • A paid and organic social media advertising campaign for NPPP4 reached nearly 500k people across the formal and informal phases, including local residents, workers and visitors to the Park. Content was liked, shared or commented on 3,673 times. The team also created a partner toolkit of resources for e-newsletters, social media and print publications. • A new 'Cairngorms Voices' platform has been created on our website to showcase stories from the people of the National Park. From photo stories to audio, video and blogs, this new platform will be rolled out as part of the 2022 Year of Scotland's Stories. We plan to use it to showcase Heritage Horizons projects, NPPP4 contributors, Green Recovery Fund recipients, managing for visitors activity and much more. • Social media training has been provided for a number of departments (including the conservation and peatland teams),

	<p>covering how to use social media both in an organisational and individual capacity.</p>
c. Press and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of press releases, columns, interviews and videos were taken forward to accompany our NPPP4 promotion, including a partnership with the Press and Journal and Inverness Courier, and paid advertising in the Deeside and Donside Piper, Strathspey Herald and the Dundee Courier. • Releases were also created to recognise the peatland team winning a ‘Rural Natural Capital’ SHIRE award, a new fund for youth projects in the Park, the launch of Wee Walks Week, and a variety of planning updates. Reactive lines were produced on everything from grouse shooting in the Park (Reuters) to the Speyside Way extension (P&J) and planning decisions. • We worked with National Geographic and VisitScotland on a paid-for editorial called ‘Scotland’s Storylands’, published in late 2021. The piece featured interviews with CNPA Ranger Polly Freeman, Merryn Glover, Hamish Napier, canoe guide Dave Craig and various other Park residents. • Regular e-newsletters continue to be sent out on a variety of fronts, including Cairngorms News (monthly, 1,200 subscribers), Cairngorms Nature (every 8 weeks, 1,200 subscribers), NPPP4 (weekly, 850 subscribers), Nature Explorers (quarterly, 150 subscribers), Active Cairngorms (quarterly, 500 subscribers), Volunteer Cairngorms (monthly, 500 subscribers), Make It Yours (4-6 months, 250 subscribers), and all staff (weekly, 80+ respondents). We are hoping to standardise the platform, design and distribution for these over the next six to 12 months.
d. Public engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We carried out face-to-face and online sessions with a range of audiences for NPPP4, including community groups, schools, farmers / other land managers and local businesses. Whilst attendance was impacted by Covid-19, over 500 people and 50+ organisations were engaged through these activities and we plan to continue many of them to provide clear feedback on the results and promote Heritage Horizons. • In addition, we commissioned independent research agency Scotinform to conduct a series of 1:1 interviews (17 in total) with audiences we had not received much response from last time around. This included ethnic minority groups and audiences with accessibility needs, as well as land managers, local businesses, community groups and health providers. • As referenced in the October board update, we are taking forward a series of audience workshops in order to develop ‘audience personas’ for the nine or ten core groups we communicate with. These will include details of who the audience is, what they currently think of CNP / CNPA, where we want them to be, main channels of communication, key messages and so on. These will underpin all comms activity going forward.
e. Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pdf, print and accessible Word versions of the NPPP4 draft plan were produced in late September / early October, alongside an

	<p>A5 promotional postcard (distributed to 12,000 postcodes in the Park) and A3 posters (which popped up in 150 high-footfall locations including community noticeboards, cafes and shops). Our data shows that the postcard and posters drove significant resident response to the consultation when they dropped in late October.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work is ongoing on the 2021 Annual Review, which will feature case studies from across CNPA's rural development, conservation and visitor management work. As in previous years, this will be published online and made available via our website.• A suite of interpretation panels were produced for the new Braemar Local Information Centre, working closely with Sarah Hubbard, owner of Cranford Guest House and Chair of Braemar Tourism Group. We are in discussions with the Highland Wildlife Park, the new Cairn Distillery, the new owners of the Invercauld Arms Hotel and others about additional interp projects over the coming months.
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2. Priority comms activity over the next three months

In line with the priorities outlined in the Comms Strategy update at the October board meeting, we are taking forward a range of activities over the next three months; these are summarised below. These projects will take place alongside a regular programme of Comms activity, coordinated through a centralised Comms Grid (see section 3 below for an early draft).

- **Scoping a regular residents' newsletter**
During the formal phase of the NPPP4 consultation we circulated an A5 postcard to 12,000 households in the Park and data from the Commonplace platform shows that this had a significant impact on resident engagement. Whilst we will need to pick up the issue of missing postcodes with Royal Mail, the project proved cost-effective and we were able to print the postcard on 100% recycled paper. We will now investigate using a similar approach for a revived residents' newsletter, covering key areas such as the rollout of NPPP4 and Heritage Horizons, conservation, planning, rural development and land management updates, and a spotlight on human stories from the Park. Depending on budget and staff resource, this is likely to be distributed three or four times a year.
- **NPPP4 / Heritage Horizons engagement events**
The Planning and Comms teams are currently going through over 1,400 responses to the NPPP4 formal consultation, with collated results likely to be ready over the next few weeks. Alongside this work – and in the run up to formal publication in the summer – we plan to continue with a series of public engagement events for key audiences, building on the success of the last six months. These events will provide an opportunity for us to share findings from the consultation, take questions on priorities and next steps, and highlight the clear links between NPPP4 delivery and upcoming Heritage Horizons public engagement. Whilst this activity will not be as

intensive as the formal consultation phase (to avoid consultation fatigue), we will prioritise four or five specific opportunities to get the message across.

- **Heritage Horizons introductory film**

As part of the final application phase to NLHF we created [this video](#) summarising our overall approach to the project, narrated by a range of voices from across the Park. The video was well received by audiences, partners and NLHF and, now that we are moving into the development phase of the project, we are keen to pull together a follow-up piece in much the same style. This time around our plan is to explain (in three minutes or less) the variety of projects involved and how they tie together, again drawing upon the voices and opinions of local residents and partners. The video is being produced by local filmmaker James Stevens – who created the first film – and will be shot in late February / early March. It will be accompanied by a series of ‘spotlight on’ Q&A blog pieces, highlighting the sheer breadth of activity taking place over the next 18 months.

- **Potential broadcast / podcast opportunities**

Following the conclusion of COP26 in Glasgow last November, there has been significant media interest in stories that connect people and local communities with the climate / nature emergencies. We reached out to producers of both broadcast and podcast content several months ago to explore a series on the people of the National Park, with the Heritage Horizons programme being a potential golden thread tying it all together. The BBC, Channel Four and Channel Five have all had recent success with ‘rural lives’ type programming and, with the right pitch, we are confident of success here. The next step is to compile a list of potential ‘storylines’ that our production partners will turn into a six to eight episode treatment, before pitching this to broadcasters. We are also working up ideas for an accompanying longer-format podcast series, as recent commissions have tended to favour this complementary approach, allowing us to delve deeper into the issues involved.

- **Media library and imagery**

At the end of last year our media library supplier went into administration, and we have been working hard to identify and rollout an alternative over the past few months. Our preferred supplier, ResourceSpace, provide a similar service for the likes of Barnardos, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Macmillan and the Disasters Emergency Committee, and includes a range of functionality to safely catalogue, store and (crucially) search the thousands of images and videos in our collection. We are currently organising and transferring files onto the new system, which should be complete by mid-February. We are also using this process as an opportunity to identify gaps in our current library. In particular, images of people (especially residents and people at work) and photos of towns and villages are in short supply. We will be looking to plug this gap in the spring and summertime.

- **New website tender**

As outlined at the October board meeting, our existing website is now well over six years old and starting to show its age, not least from a usability and accessibility standpoint (as highlighted by the recent DAC audit). Using the audience analysis we have been gathering over the past few months, we plan to work with a technical delivery partner to review our current site and wider digital ecosystem, facilitate

audience-centred workshops, carry out competitor benchmarking and user testing, and pull together a detailed technical specification for the new website (or websites). The technical spec will form the basis of a formal website development tender, which we hope to develop within the next six to 12 months, depending on the complexity of the process itself.

- **Branding work**

Alongside the above website process – another project referenced in the October board update was a review of our existing CNP and CNPA brand assets. Significant progress has been made over the past 18 years in encouraging third parties to utilise the brand, and public awareness of the brand mark is high. However, given the rate of technological progress over the past decade – and the changing demands of audiences – it feels appropriate to revisit the existing brand framework and accompanying materials to ensure they are fit for purpose. Whilst this will not involve any substantive changes to the brand mark itself, we will be looking at areas such as the relationship between CNP and CNPA brands, tone of voice, overall accessibility, web friendliness, and accompanying resources and templates. We anticipate this project kicking off in late February or March, with completion in time for the launch of our new Park Plan in the summer.

- **Speyside Way extension opening**

We plan to celebrate the completion of the Speyside Way, including the extension to Newtonmore, towards the end of March / early April 2022. The event will mark the conclusion of a two-decade long process of extension, upgrades and improvements, and will provide a good opportunity to highlight the wider suite of active travel and public transport improvements included in the Heritage Horizons programme. The team will work closely with a range of local and national stakeholders on the event, with full details to be revealed in due course.

3. Draft 2022 Comms Grid

On next page.

CNPA Communications Grid 2022

CORE THEMES

<p>JAN - FEB</p> <p>OUR FUTURE IN FOCUS <i>Your part to play</i></p> <p>Off the back of the completion of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan what does the future of the National Park look like and mean for you.</p> <p>Directed at audiences who have and have not engaged with the NPP4 consultation.</p> <p>This will then lead into the introduction for Heritage Horizons and how this links into the Park Plan.</p>	<p>MAR - APR</p> <p>OUR CULTURAL LANDSCAPE <i>Your personal heritage</i></p> <p>As visitors start to plan their future visits to the park we will highlight the cultural, artistic and historical influences that have shaped the park.</p> <p>Directed at repeat and new visitors to the Park.</p> <p>These months will also see the launch of our TreadLightly campaign, broader visitor planning advice in advance of CNBW22.</p>	<p>MAY - JUN</p> <p>OUR CLIMATE CHALLENGE <i>Your nature experience</i></p> <p>To raise levels of understanding and activity around reaching Net Zero in the Park, and to showcase the Park to families and new to nature audiences.</p> <p>Directed at residents and visitors.</p> <p>The start of the month will be dedicated to the promotion of CNBW22.</p>	<p>JUL - AUG</p> <p>OUR WELLBEING ECONOMY <i>Your rural workforce</i></p> <p>To explain the CNPAs role in the future of the economy of the NP and promote the successes of the Green Recovery Fund. August will focus on telling the stories of our rural workforce.</p> <p>Directed at residents, landowners and local businesses.</p>	<p>SEP - OCT</p> <p>OUR GREEN HEALTHCARE <i>Your health in nature</i></p> <p>To tell the story of how nature impacts our health and wellbeing, to promote the activities that residents, visitors and supporters can engage with to improve their general wellbeing.</p> <p>Directed at residents and online supporters.</p>	<p>NOV - DEC</p> <p>OUR FUTURE IN ACTION <i>Your voice matters</i></p> <p>To summarise our collective impact to date, the levels of engagement and role that the CNPA has played in delivering on the future of the NP.</p> <p>Directed at residents, land managers, partners and stakeholders.</p>
<p>KEY EVENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of the NPP4 consultation and what that means next. • Cairngorms Youth Action Team funding opportunity. • Fairfare for Heritage Horizons. 	<p>KEY EVENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC Greenspace/Dark Skies project. • TBC National Parks Forfait. • COP15 25th April - 8th May. • Start of CNPA Rangers season. 	<p>KEY EVENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNBW22 • TBC Volunteers Week • NPP4 final publication launched. 	<p>KEY EVENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grantown Show • Capercaillie National Survey results published. 	<p>KEY EVENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC Greenspace/Dark Skies project • TBC Wee Walks Week 	<p>KEY EVENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNPA Annual Review published.
<p>VISITOR MGT & ACCESS</p> <p>Plan Ahead - start to sign post to places for information at the start of February.</p>	<p>Plan Ahead - practical advice tied in with CNBW22.</p> <p>Dogs on leads - lambing and ground nesting birds.</p> <p>Adider risk - people and dogs.</p> <p>Wild camping and campervans.</p> <p>Ticks.</p>	<p>Hidden Gems - promoting lesser well known areas in the park.</p> <p>Fire risk - warnings and BBQ advice.</p> <p>Dogs on leads - lambing and ground nesting birds.</p> <p>Wild camping and campervans.</p> <p>Ticks.</p>	<p>Summer events.</p> <p>Traffic management - promote active/sustainable travel.</p> <p>Fire risk - warnings and BBQ advice.</p> <p>Dogs on leads - ground nesting birds.</p> <p>Wild camping and campervans.</p> <p>Ticks and Midges.</p>	<p>Dark Skies.</p> <p>Holiday for your health.</p> <p>Fire risk - warnings and BBQ advice.</p> <p>Stalking season.</p> <p>Wild camping and campervans.</p>	<p>Winter Activities.</p> <p>Winter safety. Snow and severe weather risks and travel warnings.</p>
<p>HERITAGE HORIZONS</p> <p>Fanfare announcement.</p>	<p>ALL TBC</p> <p>Community arts & cultural programme</p> <p>Landscape and communities (setting the scene)</p>	<p>ALL TBC</p> <p>Climate conscious communities.</p> <p>Woodland and Peatland expansion.</p> <p>Climate resilient catchments.</p> <p>Deer management.</p>	<p>ALL TBC</p> <p>Wellbeing economy.</p> <p>Regional land use partnership and land rights/responsibilities.</p> <p>Green Investment Plan.</p> <p>Cairngorms Future Farming.</p>	<p>ALL TBC</p> <p>Public health and the outdoors.</p> <p>Dementia activity.</p> <p>e-bike network.</p> <p>Glennmore transport plan.</p> <p>Active travel in B&S.</p> <p>Sustainable transport in Deeside and Angus.</p> <p>Sustainable transport in Highland Perthshire.</p> <p>Active Aviemore.</p>	<p>ALL TBC</p>