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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held in the Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore on Friday 11 March 2016 at 10.45am

### PRESENT

Peter Argyle (Convener)	John Latham
Rebecca Badger	Bill Lobban
Paul Easto	Eleanor Mackintosh
Dave Fallows	Fiona Murdoch
Katrina Farquhar	Gordon Riddler
Jeanette Gaul	Gregor Rimell
Janet Hunter	Judith Webb
Gregor Hutcheon	Brian Wood (Deputy Convener)

### In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive,  
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services,  
Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development,  
Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation & Visitor Services,  
Will Boyd Wallis, Head of Land Management Conservation,  
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board.

**Apologies:** Kate Howie Angela Douglas  
Willie McKenna

### Welcome and Introduction

1. Peter Argyle, the Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Aviemore.
2. The Convener said that interesting discussions with Douglas Graham, Vice-Chair of Highlife Highland, Douglas Wilby, Highlife Highland, Keith Legge, Scottish Youth Hostels Association, Graeme Prest, Forest Enterprise Scotland, Adam Gough, Natural Retreats on the future direction of Cairngorm and Glenmore had taken place the previous evening.

3. Apologies were received from the above Members.
4. The Convener highlighted to Members that there was a confidential session on the agenda and proposed that items of competent business were taken in advance of this paper before proceeding into a closed session. Members agreed.

### **Minutes of Last Meeting held on 11 December, 2015 – for approval**

5. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 December 2015 were agreed with no amendments.

### **Matters Arising**

6. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the matter arising section of the minutes of the meeting on 25 September 2015:
  - Action Point at Para 24 (iii.) – Closed – Paper clarifying the role and purpose of the Land Managers Forum, CDAG and Farmers Forum on today's Agenda.
  - Action Point at Para 24(vi.) – Ongoing – Councillors and Directly Elected Members to come back to the Board with a list of who will cover which area.
7. The Convenor provided an update on the Action points from the minutes of the meeting on 11 December 2015:
  - Action Point at Para 15 (i.) – In hand – Timescale post Planning Review outcome.
  - Action Point at Para 20 (i.) – Closed – actioned and agreed.
  - Action Point at Para 25 (i.) – In hand – Due annually in June and December.

### **Declarations of Interest**

8. Katrina Farquhar declared an interest in:
  - Item No. Paper 2 - Indirect interest – Is a Director of Cairngorms Outdoor Access Forum (COAT)
9. Gregor Hutcheon declared an interest in:
  - Item No. Paper 2 - Indirect interest – Is a Director of Cairngorms Outdoor Access Forum (COAT)
10. Brian Wood declared an interest in:
  - Item No. Paper 2 - Indirect interest – Is a Member of the Cairngorms Local Action Group (LAG)

## **CEO Report (Paper 1)**

11. Grant Moir, Chief Executive introduced Paper 1 which highlights the main strategic work streams that are being directed by Management Team. Grant explained that these are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver National Park Partnership Plan priorities. He highlighted the following areas:
  - Cairngorms Big Walk Weekend taking place 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2016.
  - The CEO and Convener (in different sessions) had given evidence to the Independent Review of Planning and had made the case to the panel for a change in the planning powers and Designation Order associated with the Cairngorms National Park Authority. Outcomes from this review are expected post-election.
  - The two upcoming pre-election periods in respect of the Scottish Parliament Election and the European Referendum.
12. **The Board noted the Paper.**
13. **Action:**
  - i. **The pre-election guidance to be circulated to the Board when available.**

## **2016/ 17 Budget and Operation Plan (Paper 2)**

14. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 2 which sets out the Authority's financial position and proposed budget for the 2016/17 financial year. He explained that the paper presents the proposed financial allocations for 2016/17 for core income and expenditure, together with intended operational plan investment, and seeks Board's approval to the budget and Operational Plan for 2016/17.
15. The Convener advised that the Finance & Delivery Committee had looked at the Paper this morning and had agreed that it was a very healthy position.
16. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and a discussion took place around the following:
  - a) A request was made for Annex 1 to show the previous years' figures for the Core Budget Estimates side by side. David agreed to draw this out and circulate it to the Board.
17. **The Board considered the budget proposals for 2016/17 presented in this paper and agreed to approve financial allocations for 2016/17.**

18. **Actions:**

- i. **David Cameron to circulate to the Board, previous years' figures in respect of the Core Budget Estimates.**

**Review of Land Management Forum, Farmers Forum and Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group (Paper 3)**

19. Will Boyd Wallis, Head of Land Management Conservation, introduced Paper 3 which reviews the operation of the three forums. He highlighted the following points:

- Both the Farmers and Land Management Forums currently do not operate on a fixed membership system.
- The idea is to change them into a network of people that would be involved in various meetings, running seminars on a range of topics.
- The Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group does have a membership system that needs reviewed and the aim is to strengthen and broaden the focus of the group to include upland management.

20. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- a) The way, in which the forums would work, not cutting back on communication but making them more effective for others and therefore continuing to secure the advice and knowledge being sought from them.
- b) The need for the Board to receive regular updates on these areas of work. Grant agreed that updates could be provided to the Board twice a year, in June and December as part of the corporate reporting cycle. Grant also advised that a separate paper on the successes over the past year of the Land Management Training and what is planned going forward would be taken to the Board at a future date.
- c) Make more of opportunities for staff or board to engage land management training attendees with relevant Cairngorms National Park information.
- d) Agreement that both the format of the Farmers Forum and the Land Management Forum needed to change and that the proposed approach would be a better format.
- e) In order to increase Board engagement with the forums it was requested that the key dates for land management training are circulated to the Board in plenty of time, as part of the Forward Look dates programme that the internal communication team circulates. This was agreed.
- f) Request that the Farmers E-bulletin is circulated to all Board Members for information.

- g) Confirmation that the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group fully supports the proposed increase in the scope for the forum.
- h) The need to amend the word 'cease' to 'change' in paragraph a) of the recommendations detailed in the Paper.

**21. The Board agreed:**

- a) **To change the current operation of the land management forum, its functions to be replaced through a) ongoing land manager engagement and b) land management training programme;**
- b) **To change the current Farmers' Forum into a Cairngorms Farming Network utilising existing farming groups operating in different parts of the Park;**
- c) **To continue to support the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group, broaden its remit to upland management and update the topics on which CNPA seeks advice from the group.**

**22. Actions:**

- i. **Updates on the Forums to be provided to the Board twice a year in June and December.**
- ii. **The Board to be added to the circulation list for the farmers regular e-bulletins.**
- iii. **Paper on the successes of the Land Management Training and the plans for it going forward to be taken before the Board at a later date.**
- iv. **Future key dates for the Land Management Training event to be encompassed into the Board Forward Look and circulated to the Board.**
- v. **To amend paragraph a) of the recommendations from 'cease' to 'change'.**

**Response to Flooding from Storm Frank (Paper 4)**

23. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development introduced Paper 4 which asks the Board to note the issues associated with flooding from Storm Frank (29 - 30 December 2015), particularly the steps CNPA has taken to assist the response and to look forward to implications for future management. He highlighted the following areas:

- The draft Local Flood Risk Management Plans, which form an important part of the process to plan and manage for floods, will be brought before the Planning Committee at their May 2016 meeting.

- There is a public meeting planned for 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016 in Ballater, to be organised by the Ballater and Crathie Community Council and chaired by Peter Argyle, when Aberdeenshire Council, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and others will provide feedback on what they have been doing for the community.
  - The management of future flooding risks, particularly through land and river management will be picked up in the drafting of the National Park Partnership Plan.
24. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) Recognition that some comments in the Annex to the Paper do not relate to the section of Deeside that is in the Cairngorms National Park.
  - b) The progress of the bid to Scottish Government for repairing flood damaged paths and bridges.
  - c) Confirmation that the Visit Royal Deeside and Cairngorms Business Partnership would be publicising their report (which was annexed to the paper) to all the survey respondents.
  - d) Praise for the speed at which the various agencies worked together to help with the impacts of the flooding and to repair the road that was washed away.
  - e) The community and all relevant organisations need to work together to get the message out that Deeside is open for visitors and is a great place to visit.
25. **The Board noted the paper.**
26. **Actions:**
- i. **The two organisations responsible for the report on business confidence should be asked to redact the staff names from the section with verbatim comments.**

## **AOCB**

27. The Convener advised Members that there would be no Board evening session on the 23rd June 2016.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

28. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 24 June 2016, The Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey.
29. The public part of this meeting concluded at 11.35 hours.