

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: CEO REPORT AND CONVENER UPDATE

Prepared by: GRANT MOIR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose:

1. To highlight to Board Members the main strategic areas of work that are being directed by Management Team. These are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver with partners the aspirations of the National Park Partnership Plan.

Conservation:

2. **Cairngorms Nature:** At the mid-term report stage, delivery of the Action Plan is progressing very well overall. 83% of targets and actions are considered as either complete or progressing as expected; 11% are delayed or requiring additional effort, largely due to COVID-19 restrictions during 2020/21; 4 % are considered to be at significant risk of not being delivered; and 2% are unreported. See mid-term report board paper for further info.

The two rounds of Biodiversity Challenge Fund have been completed with works for wader habitat, fresh water peal mussels, pine hoverfly and aspen planting all delivered on time and budget. The Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend has again been delivered on line – see comms update

3. **Peatland Restoration:** Recruitment is underway for a third Project Officer offering a 3-year contract following the lack of suitable candidates in the previous recruitment round. Recruitment will also start on a Peatland GIS/Data Officer. The Programme Manager is tying up all administration for the legacy projects that we are taking over the funding from NatureScot. These include 5 projects that were unable to be completed in 2020/21 due to winter weather and a further 5 projects that did not start due to contractor capacity. The project team are in the process of tendering for these as well as developing several new projects for delivery this year. A project on Invercauld Estate is not going ahead due to difficulties in agreeing reasonable access to carry out the work. The project team is finalising the grant scheme and funding procedures for the peatland programme. We are also planning to undertake some training for new contractors by pairing them up with experienced contractors.
4. **Woodland Creation:** Early indications are that these amount to roughly 10,000 ha of new woodland and would be delivered within the next five years – so potentially a

doubling of the pace of reforestation seen in recent years, and something likely to be catalysed by the increasingly buoyant carbon market. In addition to this, there will undoubtedly be schemes delivered in the next five years that neither the CNPA nor indeed the landowners themselves are yet aware of. As well as substantially increasing the amount of woodland cover (across all five local authority areas within the park), this new afforestation is likely to have significant, positive effects for forest habitat connectivity across the park, potentially benefitting a wide range of woodland species, including Capercaillie.

Uptake of the Woodland Challenge Fund in its second year (2020/21) was significantly greater than in the first year, when there were just two successful applications. In Year 2 there were seven successful applications for projects that varied in scale from 1.4 ha to 135 ha, and in grant award from £650 to £3000. In total the seven funded projects were awarded £13,688.80 and represent the creation of roughly 350 ha of new native woodland within the Cairngorms National Park

5. **Cairngorms Capercaillie Project:** Work has started in 5 of the 6 communities of place and interest. They are each at different stages in the model for co-creating plans to identify how a wider range of people, not normally engaged in conservation, can play a part in capercaillie conservation. Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland are developing a plan to unlock 100Ha of capercaillie habitat without any net loss in trails, through rider awareness, signs and guidance and supporting a sustainable trail association. The Cairngorms Business Partnership are running a consultation amongst business in the Park to gather opinion and identify areas of consensus. The Carrbridge capercaillie group have recently finished a consultation on potential path improvements around the village and now plan to develop the most popular and feasible options with the help of a qualified surveyor. Balmoral estate, and other landowners in Deeside, are gathering stakeholder opinion on capercaillie issues to inform a questionnaire for distribution later this summer. And a visitor survey to understand more about the attitudes, opinions and behaviours of visitors to Glenmore, developed by Rothiemurchus estate, F & LS Glenmore and RSPB Abernethy, will be carried out this summer.
6. **Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership:** The TGLP programme is complete. The last few weeks have been extremely busy ensuring all the interpretation has been installed correctly, completing the woodland planting and tying up all the many loose ends. This has included ensuring that things are in place for the legacy period (minimum of 10 years) going forward. CNPA will continue to oversee the financial management of the Management and Maintenance fund (overseen by the Legacy Board).
7. In the final months of the programme with the support of NLHF we diverted unused programme funds from some underspent projects to make final improvements to others. This has enabled us to invest a fantastic £3,475,942 in the Tomintoul and Glenlivet area; that's 99.8% of the total £3,483,203 budget. We are committed to a further 10 year Management and Maintenance period with an additional budget of £99,580.00.

8. Please visit the TGLP website for a really good overview of the [huge array of projects](#) that were delivered by TGLP. The website will be maintained by the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Business Partnership who are now equipped with these [excellent additional resources](#) which have stemmed from the TGLP.
9. **Deer Management.** Significant CNPA resources are being directed at the three Deer Management Groups in the south of CNP towards developing the next generation of planning in a more holistic Strategic Land Management approach, where deer are an important part. Memorandums of Understanding have been agreed in support of CNPA's Heritage Horizons funding application.

Visitor Experience:

10. **Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum:** The next CLOAF meeting is on 23 June with key discussion points being: current messaging, Speyside Way extension and promoting responsible access to lochs and rivers. There appears to be an increase in paddleboard use over the last year with concerns about disturbance to nesting birds.
11. **Tread Lightly in the Park,** encouraging responsible outdoor access, has been redrafted to make the messaging shorter and clearer. Along with this posters warning of fire risk are being recirculated and stickers, promoting safe use, to put on disposable BBQ's sold locally are being produced. Spring messaging focussed on care for ground nesting birds, including keeping dogs on leads where asked, and fire risk when there was a significant danger. Keep Scotland Beautiful and Zero Waste Scotland are both promoting summer campaigns on litter that CNPA will support.
12. **Speyside Way:** Work with the Newtonmore community on the installation to make the new start/end point is now complete with a formal opening date for the extended route to be agreed soon. Work is ongoing this summer to improve sections of the route between Aviemore and Newtonmore that were not 'new build' in the extension. Kincaig Community and Anagach Woodland Trust (Grantown-on-Spey) are both being supported to develop designs and bids for sections of original path. Discussions are under way with Highland Council, Sustrans and Hitrans on improving the signage on the on road section from Kingussie to Ruthven Barracks that coincides with National Cycle Route 7. The Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland are being grant-aided to maintain the route.
13. **Cairngorms Rangers:** Recruitment of CNPA rangers is now complete with; five full time rangers in post (inc. one FTE post designated to support the Capercaille Project), and nine seasonal rangers including one based in Angus Glens. Four young people have also joined the team as part of the national Kickstart programme where they will learn and experience 'first hand' the skills required to be a countryside ranger. Throughout the summer the team provide seven day coverage including weekends and weekend evenings. Between April and mid-May they have been on 328 patrols and spoken with 2,362 visitors, with the vast majority keen to learn more about the area and what they can do responsibly. Sadly during this period they have also collected 219 bin bags of litter: clear need to support the KSB & ZWS summer campaigns. Nature Scotland, RSPB, Forestry & Land Scotland, NTS and Balmoral Estate have all increased their

summer seasonal staff and the growing Family of Cairngorms Rangers communicate via mobile phone message groups to share experience and any requirements.

14. **Volunteering & Health Walks:** With the easing of lockdown the majority of the 38 **volunteer rangers** are now 'out on the ground', initially supporting the work of CNPA rangers and then the wider family. CNPA continue to promote countryside volunteering across the National Park using National Volunteers Week 1-7 June as a opportunity to highlight this work. Most of the **Health Walk** groups are now back out enjoying local paths with 11 groups meeting weekly. Green Health NHS Highland has also supported the training of additional walk leaders and further work is ongoing to collectively promote the opportunities available for more to enjoy short walks. Anecdotal evidence, and some path counters, indicate that in the last year more people have been enjoying short walks
15. **Local Information Centres:** The focus over the winter has been improving information at centres with updated information in Grantown Museum, and new information into Glenlivet Mountain Bike Centre and the new centre in Braemar that will be the third unstaffed centre in the National Park, along with Blair Atholl and Nethy Bridge.
16. **Education and Inclusion:** In 2020 a total of 972 John Muir Awards were completed, considerably down on normal due to Covid-19 restrictions but there are currently, in May 2021, 2278 people registered as undertaking a John Muir Award. Activity is slowly getting back to normal as restrictions ease. There has been no Junior Ranger activity in 2020 or to date in 2021, it is hoped to restart some activity later this year. Work supporting **Backbone** continues aimed at increasing participation in the outdoors among people of all backgrounds, and the rise of community groups working to get more people out into the countryside. In a symposium this September, Changing Landscapes - Actioning Change, Backbone will bring together outdoor education providers and BAME representatives to work out a strategy for change across the sector.
17. **Information and Interpretation:** CNPA visitor leaflets have been redesigned and printed for 2021, with further work ongoing on reprinting the community path leaflets and, where needed, including the national path grading that describe the overall character of the trail as easy, moderate or strenuous. Work continues on Speyside Way and Local Information Centres as outlined above. We are currently recruiting for a new Communications Coordinator (Publications and Interpretation), who will take over this area of work following Jacquie Macintyre's departure last month.

Rural Development:

18. **Local Development Plan 2021:** The Plan was adopted on 26 March and will now be used to decide on all planning applications in the Park. The Plan was accompanied by non-statutory Guidance in a range of topics including Economic Development, Natural Heritage, Landscape, Cultural Heritage, Resources, Renewable Energy and Open Space, Sport and Recreation. Further guidance on developer contributions is in development will the subject of public consultation shortly. In order to promote

interest in the planning process the staff team carried out an innovative engagement programme with the Cairngorms Youth Action Team using the popular digital maps based game, Minecraft. The Youth Action Team presented their work to Planning Committee in April. The project generated much positive media coverage and was very popular with people who have used it. The Minecraft map is now available on our website to [download](#) and will be suitable for use in many other projects.

19. **Planning Casework:** The number of planning cases under consideration by the team is rising with three new applications called-in within the last week. There are quite a few applications for motor-home parking and increased camping/caravan provision. Applications have recently been approved on some long-standing development sites, most recently at Tomintoul for 100% affordable housing on the site of the old school. The School Wood Planning application at Nethy Bridge had an appeal dismissed by the Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals who has agreed with the Planning Committee's decision to refuse planning permission for sites within the woodland.
20. **Community-led Housing Delivery:** Planning approval was granted for the Tomintoul Community Housing Project at May's Planning Committee and ground works are expected to commence later this summer. The housing allocations policy is being finalised and the list will open to applicants shortly. The planning application for Braemar's community housing project has now been submitted and is likely to go for decision in September. The next step for Braemar Community Ltd is to tender for the construction works and secure the necessary funds for delivery with a view to construction starting in Spring 2022. Staff are supporting other community-led initiatives in Laggan and elsewhere.
21. **Economic Action Plan:** The Growbiz business enterprise support programme has had further funding confirmed until the end of October 2021. The programme has three strands: 1:1 Business Support (over 140 businesses supported last year in 232 1:1 sessions, totalling over 400 hours - 63 of these sessions were with new or pre-start-up businesses.), Women's Enterprise Network and a Business Mentoring Training Programme. The Smart Village project has also concluded: [Braemar's new community portal](#) is now live while Grantown created new aerial videography footage to enhance their website. The Cairngorms Economic Steering Group met in May with special meeting with Centre for Local Economic Strategies and Wellbeing Economy Alliance to look at Community Wealth Building in anticipation a successful Heritage Horizons bid outcome in June.
22. **Community assets map:** There is growing interest in community wealth building and staff have recently been taking stock of the range of land, buildings and facilities that are owned or managed by community groups in the Park. The new map of [community-owned and managed assets](#) was shown at the recent Economic Steering Group and will be kept updated as new projects develop.
23. **Tourism Action Plan:** A paper on the mid-term review of the Tourism Action Plan was discussed at the CNPA Board meeting on 12 March. The paper outlined progress to date in delivery of the plan, and changes in priorities for future delivery on light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Plan, along with the National Park

Partnership Plan, form the basis of our submission for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas every five years. Discussions have taken place with Europarc to align the timescale of re-application to better fit Partnership Plan development. Initial feedback has been positive and we expect to develop the next Tourism Action Plan in 2022. Cairngorms Business Partnership was successful in their application to HIE's Destination Development fund and two new posts are currently being advertised. CNPA is collaborating with the CBP to ensure that current job vacancies are being widely promoted and are supported where possible with staff accommodation opportunities.

24. **Cairngorms Business Barometer:** The Q1 2021 results of the [Cairngorms Business Barometer](#) are now available. This regular survey showed a fairly optimistic picture with businesses demonstrating significantly higher confidence in the short, medium and long term compared to recent quarters. Indeed, long-term confidence surpassed the pre-pandemic level recorded in Q1 2019. The National Park designation continues to play an important role in influencing and attracting business. The overall levels of influence of the Park on attracting first time and repeat customers and influencing profitability were at their highest levels since the barometer began in 2009. Looking to the future, discussions are taking place to try to integrate data with a similar survey carried out nationwide by VisitScotland.
25. **Badenoch Great Place Project:** The project is now entering its final phase and all activities must be complete by 30 September. The multiple strands are being brought together in a set of public facing outputs (App, website, leaflets and maps). The App will be launched in late June and a PR campaign in association with Cairngorms Business Partnership is being developed to coincide with this. This will launch "Badenoch: The Storylands" as a destination within the Cairngorms National Park through promotion of the App and the new visitor itineraries. Complementary on-the-ground interpretation and signage is also being planned for future years. A Badenoch Archive has been being set up through Am Baile and volunteers are now being recruited to upload material. Hi-create have been engaged to deliver Storylands themed marketing skills training to local businesses and the Feis are working with Young people to explore and record the music of Badenoch. Doubletake productions are creating a Badenoch story tableau which will be projected on the walls of Ruthven Barracks. Badenoch Heritage Festival will be 18-25 September – including family-friendly walks and talks, films and exhibitions and a celebratory event on 25 September to mark the achievements of the Badenoch Great Place Project.
26. **Green Recovery Fund:** A total of 13 projects were funded in 2020/21 and are complete. For 2022/22 the Green Recovery Fund was re-launched using the same Principles with a budget of £300k, comprising 250k for CNPA and 50k from Cairngorms Trust. 37 applications were received, requesting a total of £533,000 from the Fund. (i.e. the Fund was oversubscribed 1.8 times). There was good geographic spread of applications with interest from many community bodies, business associations and individual businesses. Several small applications to encourage community groups to buy litter-picking equipment have already been approved, totalling less than £3k. The Panel making final decisions on the Fund (which is chaired by CNPA Board member Willie Munro) is meeting on 2 June. An update on the successful applications will be provided at the Board meeting.

Stakeholder Engagement:

27. There has been significant stakeholder engagement over the past 3 months especially on visitor management. The CEO spoke at the national visitor management summit and has also attended the national visitor management steering group and the chaired the infrastructure sub-group. The Cairngorms Managing for Visitors Steering Group now meets fortnightly with key stakeholders from across the Park. The CEO also attends a regular liaison meeting between public agencies and ENGO's.
28. The CEO has also attended the Scottish Biodiversity Programme Board, NPUK CEO Meeting, NDPB Forum, Cairngorm Mountain Advisory Group and Young Peoples Forest Expert Advisory Group. The CEO has also had meetings with HIE, ECMP, Scottish National Investment Bank, Scottish Government, Police Scotland, Cairngorm Mountain, P&K Council, Angus Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Highland Council, Edinglassie Estate, Dinnet Estate, Crown Estate Scotland and Seafeld Estates. The CEO has also met the CEO at NTS Philip Long and David Field the CEO at RZSS. There has also been significant engagement on the NPPP through the NPPP Stakeholder Group.
29. The virtual site meeting for the Heritage Horizons bid was held on 10 May with NLHF and we will find out the outcome at the end of June.
30. A new internal Engagement group met for the first time at the end of May, bringing together representatives from across the organisation to help coordinate our stakeholder engagement activities, with a particular focus (at least initially) on the National Park Partnership Plan. The informal phase of this latter consultation will go live in early June, including the rollout of a new microsite to collate online responses in one place.

Communications:

31. **Active Cairngorms – managing for visitors communications** – we continue to work with partners at a local and national level to coordinate our approach to visitor communications over the Easter and summer periods. At a national level, the VisitScotland 'Yours to Enjoy' campaign has been seen by 83% of adults in Scotland, and we are working closely with their team to produce social media, leaflet and signage content on key themes such as littering, camping, disposable barbeques etc. We collaborated with VS and CBP on a large-format digital advertising van campaign, which took place for four weeks in May. The van was located at the southern edge of the Park near Blair Atholl for the first week, before moving to Aviemore for the final three weeks. We used the van to encourage visitors to plan ahead, check out the VisitCairngorms status website, and to deliver specific visitor info around littering and wildfires. Across our comms channels, we anticipate SOAC messaging becoming increasingly important as visitor numbers rise into the summer months, and we are working closely with the ranger team to ensure their work has a high profile in the run up.
32. **Cairngorms Nature** – The Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend (CNBW) took place digitally from 14 to 16 May, offering a range of activities, videos, blogs and

competitions specifically targeted to a 'new to nature' audience. Over 1,000 people attended events on the website or through the webinars across the weekend, three quarters of whom were new to the site. This included a record 200 attendees for a webinar hosted by Scottish Environment LINK, entitled 'We need nature, nature needs us. What to do?' Whilst quieter than last year – most likely down to growing 'digital fatigue' amongst our target audience – we made a concerted effort to deepen the impact of BIG Weekend attendance year-round. This included the creation of Cairngorms Nature Explorer packs, including a bug box, sustainably made pencils and downloadable content which linked back to activities on the CNBW website. In total, 141 families signed up to the scheme and we will now be able to communicate with them on an ongoing basis about ways to get more involved in their local environment. Elsewhere, the Comms and Conservation teams worked closely on a new 'Guide to the Wood Ants of the UK' book, a five-minute highlights film for the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan, and new school resources for the Strathspey Wetlands and Waders Initiative.

33. **Make it Yours:** a new video training resource, designed to provide bitesize information for businesses and their employees, was completed in early May and shared with partners across the Park. It is available to view here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vDBw0aikgg>. We continue to support applications from businesses wanting to use the CNP brand, and launched a brand new [Heritage Interpretation toolkit](#) to assist local businesses in incorporating elements of Gaelic in their visitor information in May.
34. **Corporate Communications:** alongside our ongoing proactive and reactive media activity around managing for visitors issues, there have been a number of significant news stories in the past few months. These include our response to the golden eagle poisoning on Invercauld Estate – and the subsequent departure of Invercauld from the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership – plus further interest in our Cairngorms Minecraft map as the resource went live for all, and good coverage for the Local Development Plan adoption. Finally, a week-long Gaelic takeover of our social media channels accompanied the launch of a new Heritage Interpretation toolkit (see above); both print and broadcast interviews were carried out with key members of staff to mark the launch.
35. **Website and social media:** To update figures from the last report, our social media following grew by 25% to 50,654 over the past 12 months, whilst user engagement across all platforms (including video views) has increased by 112% to 770,480. All told, our social activity reached nearly 7.8m impressions over the course of 2020, an increase of 21%. As for our website, we have rolled out a major upgrade to the homepage, as well as adding functionality to a number of sub-pages in order to improve user experience. This includes better integration of our social media feeds and a facility to get the latest updates from 'boots on the ground'. We launched a new [Community Owned Assets webpage](#), which includes an updatable map showing over 90 assets currently owned or managed by community interest organisations. We are also updating our [Community Paths and Trails page](#) to make them more accessible to mobile users, and to incorporate an overview map of all routes to make it easier for people to find walks suitable for them. Finally, our accessibility audit work

continues, with all pdfs currently on the site being reviewed to make sure they are accessible to users via screen reader.

Organisational Development:

36. **Business Continuity Planning (BCP).** The BCP team continues to meet regularly to plan around the next stages of the SG roadmap. Staff access to the building continues to be limited to business critical reasons, which are approved and logged by Heads of Service. Staff are also able to do site/field visits, in accordance with current guidance. The default position remains that staff will be working from home, and staff are supported to do this with regards the provision of IT and office kit, and broader wellbeing support.

The approach currently being considered by Scottish Government is to review office working guidance at the end of June. In anticipation that staff may gradually be able to start returning to the office late summer, a project team has now been established to support the return of staff to the office. This team meets two-weekly and is considering how best to use our existing space to support a more hybrid approach where we expect staff will work part of their hours from home and part in the office. We are currently consulting with staff around this blended approach, and are gathering views about how best this may be implemented and supported, both through virtual staff drop-in sessions and the Staff Consultative Forum. We expect to move towards a “hot desk” situation, and offices may be reconfigured to support more meeting spaces. The project team will also consider the Ballater office, as well as Board meetings.

37. **Office Extension Project:** Plans to upgrade the meeting and social space in the old building remain on hold, as depending on guidance from Scottish Government regarding the opening of non-essential offices, we may temporarily require this space for office space, to facilitate more staff being in the office whilst still adhering to social distancing. In the meantime, the old building was fully repainted over the winter, and the kitchen and social space in that side of the office was revamped significantly.

38. **Staffing update:** Since March, staffing updates are as follows:

- a) Internal Promotions: The following staff were promoted following a competitive internal recruitment process:-
- Stephen Corcoran was promoted to the Peatland Programme Manager post
 - Pete Short, Polly Freeman and Duncan Macdonald were promoted to the permanent Ranger posts
 - Alan Smith was promoted to the Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager
 - Lucy Ford was promoted to Ranger Manager
 - Seasonal Rangers appointed were: Craig Fraser, Lianne Starbuck-Stephen, Vicky Inglis, Blair Johnston, Tom Cole
 - Naomi Kaye was appointed to the Ranger Admin and Policy Officer post

- b) External Appointments: The following staff were appointed following a competitive external recruitment process:-
- Seasonal Rangers Gillian Gibson, Louise Emslie and Anthony Seivwright,
 - Judy Baxter and Will George joined as permanent Rangers
 - Alan Atkins joined the Authority as a Planning Officer
 - Andy Davis joined as maternity cover for Sarah Henshall, Conservation Officer
- c) Staff leaving the Authority:-
- 4 staff left through the Voluntary Exit Scheme: - Alison Fleming, Jacque Macintyre, Catriona Campbell and Julie Jarvis
 - Will Boyd-Wallis, Head of Land Management left in April. This post is actively being recruited.

36. Youth Employment:

- a) **Internships:** We are currently recruiting a 4-month internship to support mountain bike trail mapping for the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project.
- b) **Apprenticeships:** Luke Diggins is our IT Apprentice, and has commenced his SVQ level 6
- c) **Kickstart posts:** The following young people were appointed to Trainee Ranger positions through the Kickstart Scheme: - Scott Hastings; Conor McBrien, Max Pillings and Danie O'Brien

37. Shared Services: Continued work to provide HR support the Scottish Land Commission has included the development of new policies, the development, staff consultation and pay remits.

38. Organisational Development: In March this year, the Authority was recognised by Flexibility Works as one the Top 10 Flexible Organisations in Scotland.

The organisation will be doing the Best Companies Staff Engagement Survey this year, which will feed in to our overarching approach to Organisational Development.

The Organisational Development Programme Board meets in June and is tasked with:-

- a) Coordinating final implementation of current Organisational Development Strategy and the migration of the organisation from business continuity operations to “new normal” operations.
- b) Coordinating the development of revised Organisational Development Strategy during 2022/23 on the back of the staff survey in Autumn 2021.
- c) Coordinating the delivery of the Organisational Development Strategy and the work associated with the architecture needed for the organisation to deliver (IT, data management etc

39. LEADER/Cairngorms Trust: A retrospective update on the LEADER Programme delivery is set out in the corporate performance updates to be considered as a separate item at this Board meeting, while the Board received the Cairngorms LEADER Executive Summary of the Monitoring and Evaluation of the current programme at its previous meeting. A small number of projects remain open and under management of the Local Action Group. Notably the sustainable transport

project has now moved from its design and procurement phase into delivery. The first 19 participants have now received a free loan of an ebike from the Cairngorms Trust, to encourage a more active lifestyle, support health improvement and offer alternate, active travel and ultra-low emission travel solutions. Participants have ranged from 18 - 24 to 65+ age ranges; 8 female and 11 male participants; and with initial participant feedback extremely positive. Procurement of ebikes was delayed by COVID19 with resultant delays in starting delivery phase. The Trust is currently seeking to extend the partnership support of Cycling UK Scotland for the project over the remainder of the current financial year, with participants to December supporting the final LEADER outcomes.

There is a developing impetus behind consideration of the future of Community Led Local Development Funding (CLLD) after the close of the LEADER Programme in December 2021. An initial options paper has been issued by Scottish Government's Rural Policy team with workshops led by the Scottish Rural Network. Both the Authority and the Cairngorms Trust is engaging in discussions on the options paper and wider dialogue on the future of CLLD.

40. **Cairngorms Trust: charity activities and voluntary giving:** The Trust is fully engaged in the Green Recovery Fund Grant processes, while continuing to evolve ideas around voluntary giving schemes. Both these areas are covered in other items considered by the Board at this meeting. Despite the hiatus in developing work around the voluntary giving scheme caused by COVID restrictions throughout 2020/21, a total of £4,300 was raised from business and individual donations over the course of the year. The Trust has completed its first two main charitable campaign projects: Kingussie Path Network Improvements and "An Osprey Nest for the Osprey Village" in Boat of Garten, and is now considering a call for its next campaign focus. The charity's first self-financed community grants scheme is also now completed.

Grant Moir
June 2021

Board Convener Report – For Information

1. The past few months have been busy initially with final pre-election meetings including the Convention of the Highlands & Islands and of the Environment Directorate with the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change & Land Reform and Rural Affairs & Natural Environment Minister.
2. The CEO and I met with the Chair & CEO of Highlands & Islands Enterprise to discuss several aspects of ongoing work and future relations between HIE and CNPA. The Deputy Convener and I also met with the Chair and Vice Chair of the CBP to discuss the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and our coordinated response to it. This was a very positive meeting and it was agreed to have a follow up meeting in six month time.
3. Outside of these external engagements, I have met regularly with the Deputy Convener, CEO and Director of Corporate Services to progress the on-going governance work which the Board agreed at the Board meeting on the 28th May. Following the election of the final members of the Governance Committee, it is my intention to make the appointments to committees a priority so that the new committees can be in place for after the summer.

Xander McDade
Board Convener

External Engagements (4th March 2021 – 3rd June 2021)

4. In addition to scheduled Board meetings and internal meetings, I have attended the following external engagements in my capacity as Convener of the Board since our last Board meeting.

Date	Engagement	Venue
15/03/21	Convention of the Highlands & Islands (part) with Carolyn Caddick, Deputy Convener	Virtual
16/03/21	Meeting with Alistair Dodds & Charlotte Wright, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and Grant Moir, CNPA CEO	Virtual
17/03/21	Meeting of Environment Directorate with Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary, and Ben Macpherson MSP, Minister	Virtual
18/03/21	Meeting with Claire Bruce, Chair and Ross Coulter, Vice Chair of Cairngorms Business Partnership and Carolyn Caddick, Deputy Convener	Virtual