
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held by telephone/video conference on Friday 27th November 2020 at 11.15am

PRESENT

(By video conferencing unless stated otherwise)

Xander McDade (Convener)	Eleanor Mackintosh
Carolyn Caddick (Deputy Convener)	Willie McKenna
Geva Blackett	Ian McLaren (from paper 3)
Peter Argyle	Dr Fiona McLean
Deirdre Falconer	William Munro
Pippa Hadley	Anne Rae Macdonald
Janet Hunter	Dr Gaener Rodger
John Kirk	Derek Ross
John Latham (from CEO report)	Judith Webb
Douglas McAdam	

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services
Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development
Dr Peter Mayhew, Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience
Gavin Miles, Head of Planning & Communities
Peter Crane, Head of Visitor Services
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

Apologies: Noted Ian McLaren and John Latham may be late joining.

Welcome and Introduction

1. Xander McDade the Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies were noted.

Minutes of Last Meetings held – for approval

3. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 11th September 2020 were agreed with no amendments.
4. The draft minutes of the last meeting held on 13th November 2020 were agreed with no amendments.
5. Members noted due to nature of a meeting held by video conference, a member may be seen as departing when it may only be connection issues. Members agreed where possible this be noted in the minutes when it happens.
6. Clarification on the situation in Braemar with the Local Development Plan (LDP). CEO stated that the LDP was submitted as per board meeting with reporter's recommendations included.

Matters Arising

7. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the previous minutes:
 - a) September Minutes - Action Point at Para 12 (i) – **Closed** – Shortlist for Nature of Scotland Awards to be circulated.
 - b) September Minutes - Action Point at Para 12 (ii) – **Closed** – River Restoration award winner video to be circulated.
 - c) September Minutes - Action Point at Para 16 (i) – **in Hand** – Director of Planning & Rural Development to raise the issue of business satisfaction at the next Cairngorms Economic Forum.
 - d) September Minutes - Action Point at Para 12 (ii) – **Closed** – Risks A14, A19 and A21 altogether into one as they have the common theme of reputational risk and bring the Strategic Risk Register back to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) at their March 2021 meeting. The Chief Executive confirmed this was discussed at ARC meeting this morning, ahead of schedule.
 - e) September Minutes - Action Point at Para 20 (i) – **Closed** – Local Authority nominated Board members conversations with their respective Education Authorities regarding encouraging schools to teach the message of taking litter home in order to help combat climate change.
 - f) September Minutes - Action Point at Para 20 (ii) – **In hand** – CEO to pick up the removal of litter bins from laybys with Local Authorities as part of wider visitor management discussions.
 - g) September Minutes - Action Point at Para 20 (iii) – **Open** – CEO to encourage National Parks UK to encourage big supermarket chains to distribute a responsible camping leaflet with every tent purchase. The CEO

updated there had not had been an opportunity yet, but this will be raised at first opportunity.

- h) September Minutes - Action Point at Para 26 (i) – **Closed** – CEO to circulate to the Board NatureScot new shared approaches around conservation and species management.
- i) September Minutes - Action Point at Para 26 (ii) – **Closed** – Deirdre Falconer to provide CEO with grid reference of Speyside Way section at Drumguish. The member confirmed this had been sent to officers and completed.

8. Action Points Arising: None

Declarations of Interest

- 9. The Convener invited Declarations of interest.
- 10. Pippa Hadley – noted as a point of transparency her role on the Board of Badenoch of Great Place project given the mention of this project in papers. Pippa confirmed there was no conflict of interest caused by this role.

CEO Report & Convener Update (Paper I)

- 11. Grant Moir, Chief Executive, introduced Paper I which highlights the main strategic work streams that are being directed by Management Team. CEO explained that these are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver National Park Partnership Plan priorities. He highlighted the following areas:
 - a) Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust have made land fund purchase of old school site
 - b) Local Development Plan submitted to Ministers this week, they have 28 days to consider that.
 - c) Rural tourism infrastructure fund: Glenmore work is being taken forward
 - d) Business barometer shows an increase in CNPA support in last quarter
- 12. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Members asked why Forest and Land Scotland have fenced off a section in Glenmore? The CEO would look into this and contact FLS.
 - b) Good to see all the stakeholder engagement in the last quarter, with members noting the massive effort undertaken and expressing their congratulations and thanks to the officer group for the extra work involved.
 - c) The Cairngorms Business Barometer made for sober reading.

- d) Noting woodland expansion targets are progressing well, members asked whether there remained much interest at the moment in woodland expansion? The CEO stated that there was a lot of interest and that the 1,000 ha target per annum was being achieved. The CEO reported the climate change plan update from Scottish Government (SG) is coming out in the next few weeks which will set out the Scotland wide targets are at a national level for woodland and that the next NPPP will have to reflect these.
- e) Members acknowledged the business barometer and perception of Cairngorms NPA, in terms of our response to post lockdown visitor management. Members noted it is important to keep up momentum, and to maintain the sense of positivity of businesses towards us and the work we have done.
- f) Good to see the work of the seasonal rangers and the other ranger services within the Park.
- g) Good to see the work on Capercaillie. Are there going to be changes to the Project Board now that it is a park-wide project. Director for Conservation stated that the board has been expanded and recently invited an economic expert to join.
- h) Members were given clarity on the location of the Peatland restoration works reported in the paper.
- i) How can we build on the legacy of Mountain and the People project? Significant legacy from the project around infrastructure, skills and volunteers. The CEO agreed there is a need to link this to Volunteer Cairngorms and maintain awareness of the maintenance requirements and responsibilities.
- j) Members recognised the breath and volume of work given challenges of this year and expressed their thanks to staff for commitment and effort. The Convener noted he planned to put a Christmas note to staff from the Board recording thanks.

13. The Board noted the Paper.

14. Action Points Arising:

- i. CEO to enquire into fencing in Glenmore area with FLS.**
- ii. Convener note to staff for breadth of work and achievements during lockdown.**

Cairngorms Green Recovery Plan Update (Paper 2)

- 15. Grant Moir, CEO introduced Paper 2 presenting an update on the current position of the Green Recovery Plan and showing progress of the plan.

16. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) Geva Blackett declared as a matter of transparency as her husband was leading on one of the projects that received funding.
 - b) The Convener stated that this was a good example a piece of work that didn't exist before April, and has already started delivering throughout communities within 4 months with significant funding.
17. **The Board noted the progress being made on the Green Recovery Plan.**
18. **Action Points Arising: None**

Cairngorms Visitor Management Review (Paper 3)

19. Grant Moir, CEO and Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services presented the end of season review looking at the visitor management work that has been undertaken in the Park this summer and also looking at the work to be carried out this winter.
20. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) Has an end of season review been held with partner organisations and has any specific feedback been received from land managers? The CEO has recently attended SLE training event and the feedback was overall really positive. There are challenges in certain places where the solutions are more difficult and may take longer to implement. Good engagement with estates overall.
 - b) Thanks for the work over summer. What are the plans for the winter as if there is snow and people cannot travel to Europe it will get very busy at key sites in the Park? The CEO is having a specific meeting with Cairngorms Mountain (CMSL) and will support the Police and Local Authorities if issues arise. A member asked for this to be discussed at the next Cairngorms Tourism Emergency Response Group meeting. This was agreed.
 - c) Need for consistent messages and signage as we go forward into next tourism season. The CEO stated that this is being taken forward at a national level and locally to get consistent approach.
 - d) Are we looking at the issues around campervans and giving messages of the right thing to do? The CEO stated that the Green Recovery Fund was supporting CBP to look at helping to provide more information on existing infrastructure. CNPA is looking at where to support new infrastructure with communities and businesses.
 - e) There has been damage to trees and areas of land in the Park and there has been an increase in environmental crime. Has this fed through into increased wildlife crime? The CEO will look into this.

- f) Visitor perception of toilets and the facilities available is crucial going forward. The CEO stated that toilets are crucial and that the quality of basic infrastructure is key going forward.
- g) Is there pressure on footpaths and are paths being eroded as people step off the path for social distancing? CEO stated that in August, according to path counters, we saw the biggest recorded usage and we will need to look at maintenance issues across the Park's core path network.
- h) There has been an increase in enquires to CNPA as the access authority. Are we able to keep up with these? Head of Visitor Services said that the team is able to cope.
- i) Point made about new winter visitors and skiing and wider need for visitor management messages around this.
- j) Importance of messaging and ensuring that it reflects what is happening on the ground. The CEO took members through the work that is happening on visitor management plans with stakeholders building on the great work done this year.
- k) We should be getting excited about the level of visitors coming to the Park and embrace the possibilities and make sure we have the right infrastructure.
- l) CEO was asked about ranger provision over the winter. The CEO stated that two rangers were being kept on by the CNPA to prepare for the next 'season'. The CEO was also asked about the establishment of a permanent CNPA Ranger Service and replied that this was being taken forward but was dependent on budget settlement in January.

21. The Board noted the update.

22. Action Point Arising:

- i. CEO to look at level of wildlife crime in the Park and whether it increased in 2020.**

Budget & Operational Plan Review (Paper 4)

23. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced Paper 4 which presents a second review of the Authority's financial position for 2020/21 in light of the impacts of COVID19 affecting the Authority since commencement of the financial year, following the first such review considered by the Board at its meeting of 12 June. He added that the paper follows consideration of these matters by the Finance and Delivery Committee at its meeting of 13 November 2020.
24. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) Congratulations to all officers for managing budgets in this challenging year. Members noted Finance and Delivery Committee looked at this 2 weeks ago, and was pleased to agree with the reallocation of £40k to visitor management infrastructure.

