

CAIRNGORMS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Meeting held on Wednesday 12th May 2004 at 10.30am
at the Seafield Lodge Hotel, Grantown on Spey

Present

Bruce Luffman (Chair)	Auld Cummerton, Strathdon
Daniel Alexander	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Elaine Booth	Scottish Enterprise Grampian
Lucia Campbell	Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board
Pete Crane	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Ruathy Donald	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Sally Dowden	Speyside Wildlife
Patricia Eccles	Nethy House, Nethy Bridge
Roger Edwards	MBSE
John Grant	SRPBA
Paul Higson	ECAP Project Co-ordinator
Bob Kinnaird	Cairngorm Mountain
Andrew Kirk	Carrbridge Tourist Association/ HOST AMC
Pierre Masson	Moray Council
Meg Mearns	Brandy Burn, Glen Clova
David Noble	Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board
Douglas Ritchie	Perth and Kinross Tourist Board
Syd Smardon	Speyside Highland Leisure Park, Aviemore
Debbie Strang	Cairngorms National Park Authority

Apologies

Neil Black	Visitscotland
Andrew Bruce Wootton	Atholl Estates
Ian Dunlop	Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board
Alistair Gronbach	Visitscotland
Andrew Harper	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Gary Marsden	Balmoral Estate
James Milne	Kinross House, Grantown
Caroline Mitchell	Aberlour Distillery
Christine Morrison	Rothiemurchus Estate
James Macfarlane	Muckrach Lodge Hotel, Dulnain Bridge
Elma McMenemy	Royal Deeside and Mearns Tourism Forum
Bob Severn	National Park Board member
Colin Smith	Angus and Dundee Tourist Board
Bill Taylor	Aviemore Mountain Resort
Elizabeth Thompson	Scottish Natural Heritage
Tim Walker	Dalwhinnie Distillery
Andy Wells	Sportscotland Glenmore Lodge
Bob Wilson	Glenlivet Estate, Tomintoul
	Aberdeen & Grampian Tourist Board

Welcome and Apologies

Action

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies.

Minutes of the Meeting of 31st March 2004 and Matters Arising

2. The minutes were approved.

3. Sustainable Tourism Charter: Debbie Strang explained that five tenders had been received and 3 consultants had been selected for interview, with interviews taking place in the next couple of weeks. If possible the successful consultant will be present at the next meeting of the Group.

Cairngorms Marketing Strategy

4. Ruathy Donald explained that the Marketing Sub Group had met twice and discussed the Strategy in detail. The document was now much more focused and concise, with much of the supplementary information included in the appendices.
5. A discussion followed on the document and there was general agreement that the final draft was one which the TDWG were content with, as it is much more cohesive and succinct, subject to following amendments:-
 - Under bullet point 1 of the key aims, the words “year round” should be deleted so that the focus is on developing, supporting and maintaining sustainable tourism.
 - There needs to be some explanation as to how the Cairngorms Brand will link with other existing brands in the area, i.e provide an overarching framework within which other strong individual brands will continue.
 - In terms of partnership working, this could also be applied to initiatives outwith the Park area.
6. The TDWG approved the Marketing Strategy subject to these amendments being made. The amended Marketing Strategy will be put forward for discussion and endorsement of the National Park Board at its next meeting in June.

RD

Brand Development

7. Danny Alexander tabled a draft brief for design consultants to develop a brand identity, which had been discussed by the Marketing Sub Group at its last meeting in March. He explained that the purpose of brief is to develop a cohesive brand for the Cairngorms which is distinct from the National Park Authority logo. Any comments on the brief should be sent to Danny Alexander by Friday 21st May. The monitoring and “policing” of use of the brand, once developed was also discussed as it was recognised that this could potentially be a complex and time consuming issue.
8. Discussion followed on the budget being allocated by the NPA for this exercise and it was explained that approval for expenditure would be sought from the National Park Board at their next meeting in June.

**ALL/
DA**

Cairngorms Visitor Guide

Business Evaluation

9. 20 questionnaires had been returned by local businesses evaluating the Cairngorms Visitor Guide, with more anticipated. Of the replies received 95% feel that the Guide should be produced again in a similar format, with 82% of businesses in Badenoch & Strathspey in favour of the Cairngorms Guide replacing the previous local guide for the area. The majority of respondents felt the Guide was of the right size, paper

quality and length of text was about right. In terms of content of the text there was a general feeling that more information on local services would be welcomed. It was agreed that once all replies had been received a report of the evaluation responses would be prepared and circulated to TDWG, and the results should feed into the planning process for next years Guide. It was suggested that a geographical breakdown of where replies had been received from should be included in the report.

RD

10. The delivery of the 2005 Guide was raised and David Noble explained, on behalf of the ATB's, that it had been agreed that they would lead the delivery of the Guide. The project management would be led by Colin Simpson of HOST. It was suggested that as there had been concerns with the process by which the 2004 Guide had been delivered & distributed, and the CNPA should be more involved in the planning process for the 2005 Guide. A paper outlining the proposed process for the 2005 Guide, learning from previous mistakes, should be prepared for the next meeting of the Group. It was also agreed that the distribution of the 2004 Guide should be followed up to ensure that businesses who had not yet received the Guide in the Park area, received them as soon as possible.

RD**DN**

Visitor Evaluation by MSc students

11. Debbie Strang explained that she had met with a group of MSc student from the University of Portsmouth this week and overseen a project to evaluate visitors views of the Cairngorms Visitor Guide. The group developed the methodology, which will include focus groups and face to face interviews and Debbie Strang will produce a report of their work for the next meeting of the TDWG.
12. The Group are still keen to carry out a further evaluation of visitors views of the Guide towards the end of the summer season.

DS

Distribution of the Guide

13. Ruathy Donald explained that although it had been agreed at the last meeting to distribute the 2004 Guide to all households in the Park, no further preparatory work had been done on this due to preparation for Expo 2004, but this would now be a priority.

RD

Expo 2004

14. Sally Dowden explained that attendance at an event such as this was new territory for the NPA. The CNPA's presence without doubt achieved its main aim of raising the profile of the area, supported by a good stand within the AGTB pavilion. A number of travel trade contacts were made and all the information collected at Expo has been collated. The dissemination of this information needs to be decided.
15. A discussion took place on the best means of disseminating the information gathered as it was recognised that a balanced approach must be taken. This is so that expectations of local businesses with no experience of the way the travel trade operates, are not unrealistically raised and also so that the travel trade are not "turned off" the area as a whole, by being contacted by a plethora of businesses who do not meet their needs. It was agreed that the information gathered would be made available

to the Tourism Development Working Group and local collective tourism organisations. They would then be able to hold this information and let their members know it was available, giving specific guidance safeguards on contacting the travel trade when doing so. Furthermore it was agreed that for future reference it would be helpful to keep the CNPA updated on members who had accessed the information and those who had benefited from it. The CNPA newsletter also highlights the Park's presence at Expo and explains that this information is available, and individuals seeking this information will therefore also be able to contact the NPA.

RD

16. It was suggested and agreed that a workshop on dealing with the travel trade should be held to improve individuals knowledge and understanding of doing business with buyers. It was agreed that September would be suitable date to hold this and the ATB's would work with the CNPA in organising this event.

**HOST/
CNPA**

17. Danny Alexander added that it had been a useful event for the NPA to attend. Furthermore in relation to next years event as most businesses are grouped geographically it might therefore be appropriate for the Cairngorms to follow a similar approach. A stand area, adjacent to both AGTB & HOST stands has been provisionally booked by the Cairngorms acting as the umbrella, with a view to encouraging businesses in the area to come together under the Cairngorms brand. Current indications are that at least 2 initiatives, who currently exhibit at Expo, based in the Cairngorms, are keen to exhibit on this basis.

Project Updates

18. Debbie Strang gave an update on the Cairngorms Gateways Working Group which will next meet on the 21st May. The identification of appropriate sites which assist the creation of a sense of arrival to the Park, is the completion of Phase 1, with Phases 2 & 3 relating to the implementation of the project.

19. The issue of tourism thistle signs in the Park was raised as although there are national guidelines on the use of these signs there is no consistency of application in the Park as different interpretations have been applied and it was felt this should be addressed, taking into account local authority policies on signage, of which Aberdeenshire is considered nationally as being one of leading local authorities.

DS

20. Roger Edwards reported that funding secured under the Northern Peripheries Programme may potentially be able to be used to assist the implementation of the Marketing Strategy.

21. Peter Crane, the newly appointed Visitor Services Officer explained that he would be looking at the whole concept of interpretation in the Park and as part of this Sam Ham has been booked to do some work for the NPA and others, over a two week period in late summer (Aug/ September). The Park Authority had also recently received a presentation from IPoint who provide robust touch screen information provision and there may be opportunities for the NPA to benefit from this technology and inform visitors of key messages.

AOCB

22. The issue of visitors being directed to Visitscotland.com in Livingston for local information was raised following media coverage of a complaint. It was explained that it is a HOST policy decision to refer telephone enquiries for information to Livingston as the priority for local TIC staff as staffing levels are not sufficient in some TIC's to handle both telephone and face to face enquiries. All complaints however are taken seriously as the priority is for visitors to get good accurate information.
23. The Group were informed that as the lease on the building where the Aviemore TIC is currently located ceases at the end of next year, HOST are currently sourcing a new location for the TIC.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 30th June: Supper Rooms, Albert Hall, Ballater

Ruathy Donald
26/05/04