

## Communications and Engagement Programme 2015

### Communications and Engagement Programme 2014/15 progress report

#### **Cairngorms Nature Campaign – Outcome: *More visitors get out into the natural environment and have a high quality and positive experience with Cairngorms nature***

1. During the first five months of the year there has been a significant increase in the amount of media coverage achieved to promote Cairngorms Nature. Feedback from the Cairngorms Nature Festival has been very positive and the event has met its overall objective to get more people to engage with Cairngorms Nature. 771 people participated in events at the Festival of which well over 500 'actively engaged' with Cairngorms Nature. The visitor online survey achieved a 12% response rate and confirmed: 100% will visit again, 85% thought the Festival was excellent or very good, 97% would recommend the Festival, 85% said it exceeded their expectations, 91% said it offered good value for money - 80% enjoyed the Festival free of charge.
2. We gained support from 36 event organisers who ran 56 events over the 2 days. The event organisers' online survey achieved a 55% response rate and confirmed: 41% thought the festival was excellent or very good, 35% fairly good, and 6% not good at all. 100% said they would be involved again, 90% said the festival is a good opportunity to meet their own objectives and 53% said they gained a good return on their investment. Given this was the first attempt at a Park-wide Cairngorms Nature festival of events these results are positive, however, there are also a lot of lessons to be learnt. In particular:
  - a) we need to start organising the Festival/confirm the event information much earlier
  - b) Social media can be used more effectively,
  - c) Provide personal rather than written briefings for VICs and other visitor facing staff
  - d) More involvement of local schools, local authorities and local communities
  - e) A 'signature' lecture event was very successful and should be repeated
  - f) We should aim to provide more opportunities for people to interact at or after events via social media
  - g) Aim to gain support via sponsorships to provide 'free' activities for children
3. We have also produced an AV show that aims to inspire people about the Park and what makes it special. Work is underway to package the materials so the show can be used with various audiences. We will use the show at four city locations surrounding the Park in support of other events including: Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh – details still to be confirmed. The material will also be split into shorter sections for use on our website, via social media and in presentations. It consists of a 2-minute introductory AV, six personal accounts about the Park plus six short updates on Cairngorms Nature species: capercaillie, ptarmigan, red squirrel, deer, osprey, wildcat.

**Year of Homecoming 2014 - Outcome: Scottish Government campaign led by VisitScotland to encourage more visitors to come to Scotland**

4. To support the Year of Homecoming we co-hosted the John Muir Conference which attracted around 250 attendees. Feedback from the event was extremely positive and whilst there weren't many international attendees, promotion of the event resulted in thousands of international website visits. We also supported the SEARs tent at the Royal Highland Show which promoted the Year of Homecoming themes and we will be working with SNH to participate in the Highland Homecoming events to promote Cairngorms Nature. VisitScotland promoted the Cairngorms Nature Festival as a flagship Year of Homecoming Event via their website and advertising campaigns.

**Active Cairngorms Campaign - Outcome: Visitors/residents are more active/cycle in the Park**

5. It was decided not to organise a Cairngorms Bike Festival in July and to focus our limited resources on supporting existing bike events across the Park. We used National Parks week to raise the profile of being active in the Park particularly cycling and introduced social media tools to build up a community of interest. In partnership with Sustrans we have funded a part-time two year post to take forward the Cycling Action Plan. Better promotion of events and opportunities to get active is a key part of this role including support for Glenlivet Bike Festival, Kingussie Bikeathon, and Petal Power women only event. We are also working with Boat of Garten Community Hall to promote the National Park to the 400 or so participants in Ride the North two day cycle event. In addition, Kingussie has got past the first stage in a bid to Cycling Scotland's Cycle Friendly and Sustainable Communities Fund with a project proposal designed to encourage.

**Make It Yours Campaign - Outcome: Business/communities promote the Park, deliver a better visitor/customer experience and benefit from the Park brand**

6. We are working with the CBP to prepare a programme for local businesses, community representatives, rangers and local schools – a presentation has been prepared and delivered successfully to the GoS Museum and Visitor Information Point staff. A programme of presentations targeting specific locations is being prepared for the autumn/winter – post the busy visitor period. Discussions with CBP are underway to agree a programme of events for businesses across the Park – possibly linked to 'World Host' training sessions. In addition, an online communications toolkit will be promoted with brand users and local businesses which includes access to free high quality images, promotional videos, fact sheets plus 'how to' guides. The Brand Development Group is also producing branded merchandise to be trialled next spring with a small number of retailers. The aim is to raise awareness of the Park, create an emotional connection and an opportunity for generating income for local businesses and potentially the work of the Cairngorms National Park. At the moment this merchandise will only use the brand without the Make It Yours strap line.

**Digital Communications:**

7. Following the review of the CNP website a tender has been submitted and a new website supplier appointed to improve the website user experience and provide more opportunities for engagement. In particular, there will be a bigger visual impact and delivery of simpler messages. We will also look at how we can improve the 'Visit' section of the website so that it is more inspiring for users while providing useful information. The new website is expected to go live in March 2015. Social media tools are also being used to promote Cairngorms News, Cairngorms Nature and Active Cairngorms and a training programme for CNPA staff over the next six months will help us make best use of these tools to effectively support our communications objectives.

**Stakeholder Engagement:**

8. A stakeholder engagement programme has been prepared and engagement with Ministers, MSPs, influencers and key partners has resulted in greater collaboration and support for the Park and its work. The Minister for Environment and Climate Change will host a NPPP Strategy Group meeting in November and an MSP survey will be carried in November/December 2014. Board members continue to support a range of events and activities agreed with the Convener.

**Planning Service Improvement Plan (SiP):**

9. A paper setting out the service improvements for our planning services was discussed at the planning committee on 4<sup>th</sup> July. This sets out what communications and engagement support is proposed including support for the adoption of the new Local Development Plan and consultation on the main issues report for LDP2.