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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## APPROVED MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore on Friday 12 September 2014 at 10.30am

### PRESENT

Duncan Bryden (Convenor)	Eleanor Mackintosh
Peter Argyle	Mary McCafferty
Dave Fallows	Willie McKenna
Gregor Rimell	Katrina Farquhar
Jeanette Gaul	Martin Price
Gregor Hutcheon	Gordon Riddler
John Latham	Brian Wood (Deputy Convenor)
Bill Lobban	

### 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  
Sandra Middleton, Head of Rural Development  
Will Boyd Wallis, Head of Land Management & Conservation  
Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development  
Alice Mayne, Grants Manager  
Justin Prigmore, Capercaillie Framework Officer  
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board.

### Apologies:

Fiona Murdoch	Kate Howie
Angela Douglas	Paul Easto

### Welcome and Introduction

1. Duncan Bryden, the Convenor, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Aviemore.
2. The Convenor said that a positive introductory session with Ian Ross, Chairman and Ian Jardine, Chief Executive of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) had taken place the previous evening. The Convenor added that it was a positive start in building a relationship with the new Chairman of SNH.
3. Apologies received from Board Members were noted.

## **Minutes of Last Meeting held on 27 June, 2014 – for approval**

4. The draft Confidential Minutes of the meetings held on Friday 27 March 2014 and Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2014 were agreed.
5. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 June 2014 were agreed.

## **Matters Arising**

6. The Convener provided an update on the Action Points from the previous meeting:
  - Action Point at Para. 17: This hadn't been circulated however David Cameron provided that Board with a verbal update. The current headcount is 67 staff which is the full time equivalent of 58 staff;
  - Action Point at Para. 24: Gordon Riddler has been identified as the Board Champion for Economic Development and Diversification Strategy and for Cairngorms Business Partnership;
  - Action Point at Para. 34: Board Training has been organised for Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014;
  - Action Point at Para. 42: To be brought forward as it has not happened;
  - Action Point at Para. 46: Closed.

## **Declarations of Interest**

7. There were no interests declared.

## **Deputy Convener Election (Paper 1)**

8. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, as the Authority's nominated Proper Officer, conducted the election for the position of Deputy Convener.
9. David advised the Board that he had not received any nominations for the position from Board Members who were absent today.
10. David invited nominations from the Board for the Deputy Convener position. Brian Wood was nominated by Gordon Riddler and seconded by Gregor Rimell. There were no other nominations.
11. **Brian Wood was elected as Deputy Convener for a second term to last 3 years.**
12. The Convener congratulated Brian on behalf of the Board and said that he was looking forward to his involvement.
13. **Action: None.**

## **CEO Report (Paper 2)**

14. Grant Moir, Chief Executive, introduced Paper 2 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 points:

- The Upland Path Conference had been cancelled due to the insufficient uptake;
- On the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014, the UK Association of National Park Authorities Chief Executives will be discussing the proposals around the governance arrangements for sponsorship. Following this meeting the proposal should be able to be circulated to the Board for discussion in October 2014 in preparation for the National Park Convenors meeting in late Autumn 2014;
- The Report on Examination of the Proposed Local Development Plan from the Scottish Government Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) was received on 8 September. Staff were currently looking at the recommendations and at the programme of work required to consider them and adopt the Plan. He advised that the main issues were around one housing site being removed in Nethybridge and the boundaries of one housing site in Carrbridge being reduced. He also stated that there were clarifications to Natura wording in the document. Overall the Report is broadly supportive of the policy stance taken by CNPA and it will be brought before the Planning Committee on 21 November 2014, to enable meeting the Scottish Government deadline of 8 December 2014. Thereafter it will lie with the Scottish Government for 28 days and, if Ministers make no further changes, the CNPA can then adopt it. This is currently scheduled for February 2015.

15. The Board discussed the following:

- The public open day planned to develop the Glenmore and Cairngorm Mountain Masterplan was noted. A member asked if an additional public open day in Glenmore could be added. Hamish advised that he would liaise with Forestry Commission Scotland and see if it was possible;
- The changes to the two housing allocations in the Local Development Plan (LDP). Murray made clear that the DPEA Report would now be a significant material consideration in any planning decisions taken up until the new LDP is adopted.

16. The Convenor advised the Board that the National Park Partnership Ministerial meeting is still to be scheduled. The Minister is keen to support the Park but diary availability is limited.

**17. The Board agreed that this Paper was useful and thanked Grant for pulling it together.**

**18. Actions:**

- i. Hamish Trench to discuss with Forestry Commission Scotland into the possibility of holding a public open day in Aviemore in addition to Glenmore.**

## **Proposed Cairngorms Tourism Partnership (Paper 3)**

19. Sandra Middleton, Head of Rural Development introduced Paper 3 which outlines the proposals for a Cairngorms Tourism Partnership (CTP) for the Cairngorms National Park and seeks Board support for the lead role of the CNPA in establishing this Partnership, the membership make up, remit, and approach to delivery.
20. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
  - The current role of the Sustainable Tourism Forum and the lack of private sector buy-in to the current process;
  - The need for tourism providers to see themselves as working together collaboratively and not competitively;
  - The local information in some communities is somewhat lacking;
  - The role of VisitScotland in helping to promote the Park and engaging them as a key partner in the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership;
  - The Cairngorms Business Partnership continuing to be a key partner in the area alongside other representative bodies including VisitRoyalDeeside;
  - The importance of CTP working well with the Brand Development Group;
  - The role of the CNPA in putting resources in where there are market failures;
  - Concern around the draft priorities in the Draft Action Plan being too wide to deliver and the need for the CTP to focus on the critical priorities;
  - A need to ensure community/ conservation/ land management sectors are kept informed through existing networks about the work of the proposed Tourism Partnership and the need to create better links to these networks.

The Board concluded that given the importance of tourism to the CNP support from the CNPA remains vital but our input has to be focused and prioritised.

21. The Convenor thanked all the members of the Sustainable Tourism Forum and especially Bill Lobban as Chair of the group for their efforts. He added that a letter of thanks to the Sustainable Tourism Forum should be sent.
22. **The Board agreed to support the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership to supersede the existing Sustainable Tourism Forum and confirmed Bill Lobban and Paul Easto as CNPA Board representatives.**
23. **The Board noted the Draft Tourism Action Plan subject to the following guidance:**
  - **Consideration be given as to how the CTP and the Brand Development Group will work together;**
  - **That the CNPA staff consider how community/ conservation/ land management sectors are kept informed and involved in the work of Tourism Partnership through existing networks and forums.**

## 24. Actions:

- i. **The Chair of the STF to send a letter of thanks to members of the Sustainable Tourism Forum.**

## Communications and Engagement Programme (Paper 4)

25. Grant Moir, Chief Executive introduced Paper 4 which seeks to gain the Board's approval on the proposed Communications and Engagement Programme for 2015/16 to support the delivery of the Communications and Engagement Strategy approved in January 2012.

26. The Board discussed the following:

- The progress of the three campaigns and the hopes that with continuing the focus on these that the outcomes will be realised;
- The refreshed website and the need to simplify document retrieval in the future especially around Planning;
- Developing a programme of activity in the Park around Year of Food and Drink in 2015 and linking relevant activity into the proposed campaigns.

The Board emphasised the need for clear and straight forward communication with simple targeted messages.

27. **The Board agreed to endorse the Communications and Engagement Programme.**

28. **Action: None.**

## Review of Committee Membership (Paper 5)

29. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced Paper 5 which presents current Committee membership and requests the Board to determine any changes to Committee membership for the coming 12 months.

30. David Cameron advised that the current Committee Membership is as follows:

### **Staffing and Recruitment Committee**

Brian Wood  
Duncan Bryden  
Katrina Farquhar  
John Latham  
Willie McKenna

### **Audit Committee**

Gordon Riddler  
Jeanette Gaul  
Gregor Hutcheon  
Brian Wood  
Fiona Murdoch

## **Finance Committee**

Kate Howie  
Eleanor Mackintosh  
Duncan Bryden  
Gregor Rimell  
Angela Douglas

**31. The Board concluded that they were happy to continue with the membership of Committees as it stands for the 12 months to September 2015.**

32. David advised the Board that at the next meeting of these Committees, a Convenor of each Committee would need to be elected.

33. Eleanor Mackintosh, Planning Committee Convenor reminded Board and staff that the positions of Planning Committee Convenor and Deputy Convenor need to be agreed at the next Planning Committee meeting on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Staff agreed that this would be added to the Agenda.

### **34. Action:**

- i. **Election of Convenor and Deputy Convenor of Planning Committee to be added to 26 September 2014, Planning Committee Agenda.**
- ii. **Election of Committee Convenors at next Finance, Audit and S&R**

## **Audit Committee Annual Report (Paper 6)**

35. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced Paper 6 which presents the Audit Committee Annual Report to the Board.

36. In response to a request for clarity regarding the colouring of Risk 16, which is around community capacity and leadership not being adequate to fully engage in the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan. David advised that since the time of writing the Risk Register in March 2014 this risk had been reassessed and was now green.

37. Gordon Riddler as Audit Committee Convenor advised that the Audit Committee Meeting had taken place after these Papers went out and as a result amendments had been made to the Risk Register:

- Minor corrections had been done;
- Risks will be grouped thematically and a clear distinction will be made between the Authority's risks and the risks to the Cairngorms National Park;
- Those with an ongoing downward trend are to be removed;
- When the new Corporate Plan is in place, the Audit Committee between March and June 2015, aim to review the risks as part of that process.

38. The Convenor noted the comments from the Auditors and the excellence of the report. The Audit Committee Convenor thanked the external auditors for their input and performance and thanked staff for their all hard work.

**39. The Board noted the recommendations as set out in the Paper.**

**40. Actions:               None.**

### **Update on Cairngorms LEADER (Paper 7)**

41. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 7 which provides the Board with an update on the evolution of the Cairngorms LEADER Programme for 2014 to 2020. David added that consideration of the paper also affords an opportunity for the Board to consider its nomination for an appointee to the newly formed CLAG, as mentioned at the June Board meeting.

42. The Board engaged in a full discussion and the following points were made:

- It is good to see the breakdown of figures and in particular what the CNPA contributes;
- Recognition that the CNPA being the lead partner is vital;
- The need to target disabled and disadvantaged groups;
- Readiness to proceed when funding available from the Scottish Government;
- The governance, compliance, independence and stewardship of the Cairngorms LAG.

**43. The Board agreed to all the recommendations stated in the Paper.**

**44. The Convenor advised that 3 Board Members (Brian Wood, Dave Fallows and Eleanor Mackintosh) were interested in becoming the Board Member nominee to the CLAG.**

**45. Brian Wood was agreed as the nominated Board member nominee to the CLAG. The Convenor advised that Brian would come off the Audit Committee.**

**46. Action:               None**

### **Cairngorms Fund (Paper 8)**

47. David Cameron presented Paper 8 which facilitates a follow up discussion on the potential development of a charitable entity to receive and distribute financial donations to the benefit of projects within the National Park and delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP).

48. David highlighted that the Board previously raised concerns at the number of entities being set up and that the opportunity was there to use the LEADER body as an 'arm's length' corporate body to include the Cairngorm Fund. He advised that he had briefly discussed this with the Cairngorms LAG who were in agreement. He added that if the Board agreed, the Memorandum and Articles of the new corporate body would be drafted and brought back before the Board for comment.

49. In discussion the Board made the following points:

- The need for different sets of criteria for drawing down each funding pot;
- The cost and promotion benefits of setting up this fund at the same time as setting up the new LEADER Programme;
- The intention of putting the funds released from the merchandising exercise into this fund.

**50. In conclusion the Board agreed that this new corporate body would potentially be a good home to house Cairngorm Fund income and therefore agreed to the recommendation as set out in the Paper.**

**51. Action: When prepared, the Memorandum and Articles of new corporate body are to be brought back to the Board.**

52. The meeting adjourned for lunch at this point.

53. Will Boyd Wallis and Justin Prigmore joined the meeting.

## **CNPA Community Engagement and Support (Paper 9)**

54. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning and Rural Development introduced Paper 9 and drew the Board's attention to the following points:

- The Directors of the Association of Cairngorms Communities have considered the review. There is a need for further dialogue with Directors before the Paper is brought back to the Board in December;
- Discussions are due to take place in next few weeks around how the Community Development Officers will be funded in the future.

55. The Board considered the Paper and made the following points:

- Praise for the enthusiasm of Lee Haxton, the CNPA Community Support Manager;
- Asset transfer and Community Right to Buy and how the CNPA could help Communities to identify parcels of land for this;
- Recognition that there are different options for the way Community Development Officers could work.

56. The Convenor invited Alice Mayne, Grants Manager to comment on the relationship between the Community Development Officers and LEADER. Alice advised the Board of the following:

- LEADER funding must prove additionality in order to fund projects;
- The Cairngorms LAG is waiting in the wings to see what the Board decide that they want to do in relation to community activity so that the Cairngorms LAG can complement it.



**57. The Board noted the progress.**

**58. Action:               None.**

### **Capercaillie Framework Progress (Paper 10)**

59. Will Boyd Wallis, Head of Land Management and Conservation introduced Paper 10 which provides Members with an update on the progress with the Capercaillie Framework. He went on to advise that Justin Prigmore had been taking this forward.

60. Justin Prigmore highlighted the following points to the Board:

- 80% of the UK's population of Capercaillie are found in Strathspey;
- He has been working with the Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF) and advised that they are supportive of the way data has been gathered;
- He has been working with the Association of Cairngorms Communities who are keen on developing a community focus and there is a particular opportunity for communities wanting to take a sense of 'ownership' of birds around settlements;
- The recent Project Board meeting helped to refine the conclusions and provide a steer to develop the recommendations;
- The next steps include the drafting of the report in consultation with the Project Board which will be brought to the Board for approval in December 2014.

61. The Board considered the Paper and held discussions around the following:

- The mapping and what it illustrates;
- The status of capercaillie population in Deeside and Donside and relevant conservation measures;
- The ability to connect corridors of woodland to allow capercaillie to spread;
- The evidence base for the decline specifically around Forestry Management techniques, such as fencing, and climate change;

62. The Convenor thanked Justin Prigmore for the good work carried out to date. He advised that the Board were looking forward to the Board Paper in December which should detail the project priorities, robust evidence-based recommendations, the commitment of partners, and resource implications. .

**63. The Board noted the progress of the Project.**

**64. Actions:**

- i. Full Board paper to be presented to the December meeting**
- ii. To consider how the mapping in particular will be provided in December.**

### **National Park Partnership Plan Annual Progress Report (Paper 11)**

65. Hamish Trench introduced Paper 11 which summarises the annual progress in delivering the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan. Hamish highlighted the following to the Board:

- The Strategic Delivery Group (SDG) had recently met and is discussing the major issues in the Park. A sub group of the SDG will be established to look at the next National Park Partnership Plan and Local Development Plan;
- There will be an Annual Progress Report at the end of the year similar to that of last year.

66. The Board considered the Paper and made the following comments:

- The ineffectiveness of the Indicator regarding settlements and built developments;
- The presentation format of the indicators in the 'Progress to 2016 Targets' column on page 4 of the Paper;
- The need to review the indicators at the mid-term review of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
- The overall progress as summarised in the Table 2.

**67. The Board noted the good progress being made overall and asked that the indicators be reviewed as part of the mid-term review of the NPPP.**

**68. Action:               None.**

### **Corporate Plan Progress Delivery Report (Paper 12)**

69. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 12 which presents a 6 monthly overview of the progress with the Authority's Corporate Plan. David highlighted the following points to the Board:

- With reference to Paper 12 Annex 2 the staff turnover indicator at the last update in March 2014 was red and is now rated green;
- Work is in progress on the amber rated outcomes;

**70. The Board noted the progress being made.**

**71. Action:               None.**

### **Update on Organisational Development (Paper 13)**

72. Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development introduced Paper 13 which provides an update of the current and future activity to support the implementation and embedding of the Organisational Development Strategy (ODS). Kate advised the Board that the Staffing and Recruitment Committee had, at their July meeting, requested that the Board be updated regularly of the key highlights.

**73. The Board noted the progress being made.**

**74. Action:               None.**

## **AOCB**

75. The Convenor invited nominations for an Audit Committee Member in light of Brian Wood stepping down. Dave Fallows agreed to become an Audit Committee Member.
76. The Chief Executive advised the Board that on the back of the DPEA Report on the LDP there would be a few media articles focusing on the differing points of view of Conservationists and Developers.
77. The Chief Executive informed the Board that the 2015 Board Meeting dates were currently being drafted and it was hoped to get them out to them next week. Grant asked Board members to flag up any major clashes as soon as possible.
78. The Convenor reminded the Board that this was Martin Price's last meeting as he was stepping down from the Board. The Convenor went on to thank Martin on behalf of the Board for his involvement, the contributions that he brought and that he will be sorely missed. The Convenor wished him the best in all his future activities.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

79. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 12 December 2014, venue to be confirmed.
80. A suggestion had been made to invite Scottish Land & Estates, The Moorland Forum and RSPB to discussions and dinner the night before the formal Board meeting.
81. Meeting ended at 14.30.