
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at Community Hall, Boat of Garten on Friday 12 December 2014 at 10.30am

PRESENT

Duncan Bryden (Convenor)	Eleanor Mackintosh
Peter Argyle	Mary McCafferty
Dave Fallows	Willie McKenna
Gregor Rimell	Katrina Farquhar
Jeanette Gaul	Gordon Riddler
John Latham	Brian Wood (Deputy Convenor)
Bill Lobban	Kate Howie
Angela Douglas	Fiona Murdoch
Paul Easto	

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
Justin Prigmore, Cairngorms Nature Officer
David Clyne, Recreation & Access Manager
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board.

Apologies:

Gregor Hutcheon Jeanette Gaul

Welcome and Introduction

1. Duncan Bryden, the Convenor, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Boat of Garten.
2. The Convenor said that a positive discussion on moorland management with Simon Thorpe, Director of the Moorland Forum and Pete Mayhew, RSPB Conservation Manager had taken place the previous evening.
3. Apologies received from Board Members were noted.

Minutes of Last Meeting held on 12 September & 26 September 2014 – for approval

4. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 12 September 2014 were agreed with no amendments.
5. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 September 2014 were agreed with no amendments.

Matters Arising

6. The Convenor provided an update on the Action points from the previous meeting:
 - Action Point at Para. 18: Is in hand and will take place in the New Year;
 - Action Point at Para. 24: is discharged;
 - Action Point at Para. 34: is discharged;
 - Action Point at Para. 51: is on today's agenda;
 - Action Point at Para. 64: is on today's agenda.
7. Brian Wood as Board Member nominee on the Cairngorm Local Action Group (CLAG) provided the Board with an update. His main points were:
 - had recently attended two meetings of the CLAG;
 - much of the main business was spent sifting through applications for membership of the CLAG;
 - subsequently 2 further CLAG Members had been appointed;
 - 3 or 4 vacancies were still to be filled;
 - representation on the CLAG is particularly welcomed from representatives in the following sectors:
 - a) Agriculture, food and drink;
 - b) Engagement with young people;
 - c) Apprenticeships and training.
 - Board Members are encouraged to advise Brian Wood or David Cameron should they know anyone with an interest in any of these areas.

8. Action:

- i. **CNPA Board Members to inform Brian Wood or David Cameron of relevant people that could be encouraged to apply to become a CLAG Member.**

Declarations of Interest

9. There were no interests declared.

Board Convenor Elections 2015 (Paper 1)

10. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced this Paper which considers the plans for the election of the Board Convenor in 2015. David highlighted that the Standing Orders state that this would normally take place in March 2015. However as the elections for Directly Elected Board Members is scheduled to take place in March 15, with another Ministerial appointee also expected early in the New Year, he advised that the Board may want to consider deferring elections to June to enable any new board members to settle-in before their becoming involved in Convenor Elections.
11. **The Board agreed to suspend Standing Orders directing the timing of the election as March 2015 to allow time for any new appointees and / or directly elected Board members to become more involved with colleagues and aware of the operations and priorities of the Authority, and consequently to hold the Board Convenor election in June 2015.**
12. **Action: None.**

CEO Report (Paper 2)

13. 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. His main highlights were as follows:
- The Land Reform Consultation is currently live and closes in February 2015 - the Board Business Session in January 2015 will be used to discuss the CNPA response;
 - The John Muir Award has given out its 100,000th John Muir Award in Scotland. 25, 000 of these awards have been granted in the Cairngorms National Park;
14. In response to a Board Member's query asking if a Board Member could submit a personal response to the Land Reform Consultation, David Cameron advised that it would be best not to in case there is a conflict of interest arising when considering the Authority's position . In response to a further question, David advised that a Member's partner was free to submit their own individual response.
15. The Board credited CNPA Staff Elspeth Grant and Alan Smith for their hard work in pushing John Muir Awards.
16. **The Board noted the Paper.**
17. **Action:**
- i. **Board Members advised to read around the Land Reform subject in preparation for discussions in January 2015.**

Capercaillie Framework: Phase I Report (Paper 3)

18. Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation & Visitor Services introduced Paper 3 which addresses strategic challenges for the National Park in relation to reversing the national decline of the capercaillie and the integration of management required to reverse this trend.
19. The Convenor drew Board Members attention to the info-graphic which had been tabled at the meeting.
20. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - The positive and negative implications of potentially enhanced habitat connectivity on the wider species in the Cairngorms National Park;
 - Lack of predation data to inform spatial analysis;
 - How it complements and delivers elements of the Cairngorms Nature Plan;
 - Recreation management;
 - The need to have a stronger emphasis on the correlation between management actions and proposed outcomes in the monitoring;
 - The meaning of the ratings on page 5 of Annex 1 of Paper 3;
 - Predator control;
 - Estimated dispersal of capercaillie with reference to figure 9 on page 22 of Annex 1 of the Paper;
 - Caution with the single species approach and the importance of taking other species into consideration in tandem; confirmation that this is set in the overall policy approach to habitat enhancement;
 - The lack of detail referring to the impacts of climate change on the species;
 - What a vibrant population of the species would look like;
 - The need for an exit strategy to be in place;
 - The need for a review process to be put into the Framework;
 - Expectation to access funding from SRDP and the Life Fund to fund bite sized chunks of the work;
 - The resource implication for the CNPA;
 - The need to include a glossary of the meaning of scientific and/ or specialist words detailed in the Framework;
 - Confirmation that the scope of phase 2 will be worked up in more detail and fully project planned by the project team, including assessment of priorities and funding sources;
 - Discussion of the risks both presentationally and on the ground of an approach seeking to restrict/adjust access in some places; and confirmation that this will be addressed with full engagement with recreation communities of interest.
 - Recognition of significant work to date by staff team
 - What Stage 2 of the project will entail.
21. In conclusion the Board provided staff with the following steer:
 - Implications on other species to be considered;

- The review process to be worked into the Framework;
- A more succinct climate change statement to be included;
- Clear communications plan to be worked up.

22. The Board agreed to:

- a) Consider and endorse the phase 1 report of the Capercaillie Framework;**
- b) Approve the proposed project scope for phase 2;**
- c) Consider the implications for the work of CNPA and our partners.**

23. Action:

- i. CNPA Staff to incorporate the Board's suggestions listed in paragraph 20 into the Framework.**

Moorland Management (Paper 4)

24. Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation & Visitor Services introduced Paper 4 which addresses strategic issues relating to moorland management in the context of delivering the National Park Partnership Plan and aims of the National Park. The Board is asked to consider the policy and delivery implications for CNPA as a first step to guide deployment of CNPA resources and partnership working on this topic.

25. The Convenor reminded the Board that a meeting with new Minister had been secured and would take place on Monday 19th January 2015.

26. Board Members discussed the Paper and the following points were raised:

- Good moorland management upstream could combat flooding downstream and there is evidence of it having a positive impact throughout the river system;
- Concern around the 'people' aspect not coming through clearly in the outcomes whilst acknowledging that fragile rural communities are dependent on estate employment;
- The SNH process in place for assessing the progress of the Deer Management Groups;
- The impact of the proposed changes to taxation on estates;
- Support for a collaborative approach with land owners, recognising what is already being delivered;
- Praise for the Paper.

27. In conclusion the Board provided staff with the following steer:

- More of a flood risk management emphasis to be considered;
- Clarity of outcomes from better moorland management including 'people aspects' and direction of travel for the strategy to be made more explicit;
- To ensure mechanisms are in place to enable regular review of the process and communications on a regular basis,

28. The Board agreed to the recommendations set out in the Paper.

29. **Action:** **None.**

CNPA Approach to Community Engagement and Support (Paper 5)

30. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development introduced Paper 5 which asks the Board to approve the National Park Authority's future approach to working with and supporting communities, specifically in relation to the network of Community Development Officers.

31. The Board discussed the following:

- Agreement that all Board Members had an involvement in this field of work through their on the ground work with their respective communities;
- Acknowledgement that Community Development Officers provide a fundamental link between public agencies and communities;
- Recognition that Community Development Officers support communities in becoming more resilient and sustainable;
- Praise for the Association of Cairngorms Communities and the Planning Representative Network;
- Query in relation as to whether Board Members can attend Association of Cairngorms Communities meetings – Sandra Middleton agreed that all Members could attend and the next meeting would be on 17 March 2015 at the Lecht;
- The difficulty that some communities have in becoming less reliant on Community Development Officers and the need to place more onus on communities helping themselves;
- Acknowledgement that some communities require an exit strategy for the gradual withdrawal of Community Development Officer support.

32. **The Board requested officers note these points and concluded that they were happy to agree to the recommendations set out in the Paper.**

33. **Action:**

- i. **The dates of forthcoming Association of Cairngorms Communities Meetings to be circulated around Board Members.**

Active Cairngorms: A new Outdoor Access Strategy for the Cairngorms National Park (Paper 6)

33. David Clyne, Access Manager introduced Paper 6 which updates the Board on the National Park Authority's work in developing Active Cairngorms and seeks approval to undertake a formal consultation on the draft strategy.

34. The Board considered Paper 6 and the following points were discussed:

- Would like to see mention of young people, the less able, people with disadvantaged backgrounds in the listed key strategic partners under paragraph 13 of the Paper;

- A request to consult not only with neighbouring Access Authorities but also with neighbouring Access Forum's;
- The important part Rangers will have to play in delivering the Strategy;
- The importance of consulting with Community Rail Partnerships too.

34. The Board requested officers consider these points and agreed to a 12 week consultation on Active Cairngorms starting in mid-January 2015.

35. Action:

- i. **To ensure neighbouring Access Forums are consulted with.**

Revised Model Code of Conduct (Paper 7)

36. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 7 which presents the revised Code of Conduct for the Authority for approval.

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

- David confirmed that some sections had been directly lifted from the Councillors' Code of Conduct. David advised that he was happy to tailor the draft further if required;
- Discussion around declarations of interest at paragraph 65, is the onus on the Convenor if they are aware of someone not having declared an interest? David Cameron advised that the onus is primarily on the individual however it is also on the CEO, the Convenor and himself as Proper Officer to draw matters of which they may be aware to a member's attention;
- The need to add a guidance section as an Appendix which identifies which paragraphs are focused on Planning Committee operations and therefore do not apply to the CNPA Board.

38. The Board agreed to approve the Cairngorms National Park Authority's Revised Model Code of Conduct as set out in the Annex to this paper.

39. Action:

- i. **An appendix to be added to the Code of Conduct which clearly advises which of the paragraphs in the Code of Conduct, apply to the CNPA Planning Committee and which apply to the CNPA Board.**

Draft Priorities - Corporate Plan 2015-2018 (Paper 8)

38. Grant Moir presented an update on of the strategic priorities for the Cairngorms National Park Authority from 2015 – 2018. This paper builds on board, staff and stakeholder discussions during 2014. The finalised Corporate Plan will be brought for decision to the March 2015 Board meeting.

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

- Concern that Park brand values are not captured in the draft Corporate Plan;
- The strands of activity that would be given less priority in the draft Corporate Plan.

41. **The Board agreed to the recommendations.**

42. **Action:**

- The work strands being dropped from the new Corporate Plan to be highlighted at the next Board meeting.**

2014/ 15 Budget Management Update (Paper 9)

43. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 9 which presents a brief update to Board on the Management of the 2014/15 financial management position following approval of the budget, including an over-programmed element, by the Board at its meeting in March 2014. This high level overview presented to Board complements the more detailed and regular financial monitoring arrangements discharged through the Board's Finance and Delivery Committee.

44. **The Board noted the progress, and that levels of over-programming were reducing satisfactorily toward a break-even year end position as intended at the outset of the year.**

45. **Action: None.**

AOCB

46. Fiona Murdoch advised that Cabrach Community Association had approached the Scottish Government regarding applying to join the Cairngorms National Park. A response in writing was received by the Community Association advising them to contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority direct. Grant requested that Fiona forward a copy of the letter from Scottish Government direct to him to look into.

47. The Convenor assured the Board that outside parties can send newsletters to the Clerk to the Board which will then either be distributed in the next Board mail out or brought along to be distributed at the next meeting of the Board. He added that this procedure was not an endorsement of the organisation producing the information or of the information itself. The procedure is open to everyone and is a practice adopted to save on postage costs.

48. A Board Member advised that it was a positive step to learn that the CNPA Management Team had met with senior directors of the Highland Council recently. Grant advised that a similar meeting with Aberdeenshire Council will be taking place once the new CEO's had been appointed, expected to be in February 2015.

49. A Board Member queried the timetable for the election of Directly Elected Board Members. It was agreed that this would be circulated.

50. Murray Ferguson advised that there were 11 planning applications up for decision at the forthcoming Planning Committee meeting on 19th December 2014. He advised that there would also be a site visit prior to the meeting. The Board were advised that a new Cairngorms Planning Advice Note on site visits was also included in their pack of papers.

51. The Convenor informed the Board that he is on a panel interviewing applicants for the current CNPA Board vacancy next week.

52. Actions:

- i. Fiona Murdoch to forward a copy of the Scottish Government letter to Grant Moir, as detailed in paragraph 46.**
- ii. Timetable for Directly Elected Board Members to be circulated to Board Members.**
- iii. The draft Board minutes to be circulated to all Board Members within a month following each meeting as waiting 3 months to review the draft minutes was too long.**

Date of Next Meeting

53. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 27 March 2015, Blair Atholl.

54. Meeting ended at 13.15.