



Draft Minutes of the Formal Board Meeting

Held at Cairngorms National Park Authority office, Grantown on Spey

In Person

28 June 2024 at 10.00am

Present

Sandy Bremner (Convener)

Chris Beattie

Jackie Brierton

Kenny Deans

John Kirk

Bill Lobban

Dr Fiona McLean

Duncan Miller

Ann Ross

Eleanor Mackintosh (Deputy Convener)

Geva Blackett

Peter Cosgrove

Paul Gibb

Russell Jones

Lauren MacCallum

Xander McDade

Steve Micklewright

Derek Ross

In Attendance

Grant Moir, CEO

David Cameron, Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services

Gavin Miles, Director of Planning and Place

Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change

Colin McClean, Head of Land Management

Colin Simpson, Head of Visitor Services

Oliver Davies, Head of Communications and Engagement

Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development

Karen Johnstone, Clerk to the Board

Apologies

Dr Hannah Grist



Welcome and introduction

1. Sandy Bremner, the Board Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted. Convener extended a special welcome to new board member Jackie Brierton.

Approval of minutes of previous meetings

2. The draft minutes of the last meeting held on the 22 March 2024 were agreed with no amendments.

Matters arising not covered elsewhere

3. The Board Convener provided an update on the action points from September 2023 minutes:

ACTION	Status
Draft Minutes – 8 September 2023	
Paper 2: National Park Partnership Plan Annual Update	
At para 14 i. The CEO confirmed that we will speak with Cairngorms Business Partnership and discuss their long-term plans and come back to the Board with an update.	Completed
Paper 4: Capercaillie Conservation	
At para 21 i. Strategic aspects of the plan come back to the Board for approval and Performance Committees for regular updates, this was seconded by Gaener Rodger and Doug McAdam.	On Agenda
Draft Minutes 22 March 202	
Paper 1 CEO report	
At para 7 ii. CEO, to prepare a briefing note on farming activity and statistics within the Cairngorms National Park and distribute to the Board. iii. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning and Place to write to the Scottish Canoe Society about access to the River Spey.	In hand Completed



Paper 2 Cairngorms National Park Authority budget and operational plan for 2024/25	
At para 9 i. A list of community grants to be published on the Cairngorms National Park Website and circulated with Members.	Completed
Paper 3 Managing deer for climate and nature: consultation	
At para 13 ii. Colin McClean to add a paragraph to the consultation on the issue of roe deer in the Cairngorms National Park.	Completed
iii. Colin McClean to expand the Cairngorms National Parks response around the close season.	Completed

Declarations of interest

4. No declarations of interest.

CEO Report

5. Grant Moir, Chief Executive, introduced the paper which was to highlight to board members the main strategic areas of work that are being directed by the Management Team. These are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver with partners the aspirations of the National Park Partnership Plan.
6. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Board members praised the hard work and improvements made from Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) staff and partner organisations on areas such as new policies, path improvements, floor improvement work and gaining LGBT Charter status.
 - b) A board member noted at point 10, that some entry points granite markers are in poor condition and need attention. The CEO acknowledged this and would be followed up, ensuring the signs and surroundings are improved.
 - c) A board member sought examples of good infrastructure projects taking place at the moment. The CEO noted that he cannot announce the Climate Adaptation



Fund recipients publicly at the moment will inform board members when able to do so.

7. The Board noted the Paper. The Convener thanked the Chief Executive and all staff on behalf of the Board.
8. Action Points Arising:
 - i. Ensure maintenance of signs and surroundings on granite markers entry points.

Fire Management byelaws

9. The board Convener expressed that as a Board and the National Park authority this stage has been reached reluctantly. The byelaw has to be considered to reduce the risk of wildfires after trying to educate and protect local communities and natural heritage, a significant minority continue to ignore the guidance put in place, risking nature, property and people's lives. Following this, the Park Authority undertook a public consultation which resulted in the biggest response they have ever received. The Board Convener thanked everyone for their contribution and noted that if the byelaw was supported, there would be further consultation as part of the statutory process.
10. Grant Moir, CEO introduced the paper which outlines the Park Authority have carried out an extensive consultation on potential fire management byelaws for the Cairngorms National Park following the board decision on 24 November 2023, the results of which gives the Park Authority a mandate for change.
11. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) It was noted there was a typo at point 4 saying a decision was made in 2024, which should read 2023. The CEO noted this.
 - b) Discussions were had around supporting the byelaw as board members feel the fire risk is very high and can cause so much damage to people, homes, communities and wildlife.
 - c) Concerns were raised by board members as they do not like the idea of byelaws and asked if there were any intentions to introduce other byelaws in CNPA. The CEO stated that there were no intentions at the moment and the fire byelaw is a reaction to the evidence base, previous fires, climate change and to try and prevent future damage.



- d) Board members queried the dates on the fire byelaw, concerned that April was too late and suggesting March could also be a high fire risk month. The CEO noted that the byelaw will be worded to allow flexibility in the date.
- e) Board members asked for clarification on how the byelaw would be communicated with the public. It was confirmed that this would start with education from training in schools, to education from rangers out in the Park. There would be a strategy from the Communications team, sharing it on many platforms and signage in and around the Park making it clear for residents and visitors.
- f) Board members queried how the byelaw will be managed and what training will be put in place. The CEO explained that the Rangers will continue to educate the public about the risks firstly and work alongside the police to give fixed penalty notices. CNPA will ensure that the rangers receive full training and are prepared.

12. The Board noted the paper and approved.

13. Action Points Arising: None

Update on the Integrated Wildfire Management Plan

14. Colin McClean, Head of Land Management, introduced the paper which sets out the development of an Integrated Wildfire Management Plan for the Cairngorms National Park. This paper discusses progress in the preparation of the Integrated Wildfire Management Plan.

15. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- a) A board member highlighted that there are fewer fire breaks in forests than previously. Colin McLean, Head of Land Management agreed and cited the example of watch towers no longer existing.
- b) A board member sought clarity on the definition of land holdings to help manage expectations and understanding for land managers. Head of Land Management noted this would be made clear in the plan.
- c) A board member asked what amount of time, skills, equipment and training will be required and suggested land managers are supported in this going forward. The CEO highlighted that there is a training requirement through the wildfire management and muirburn bill, this might put a strain on training in fire



management as a high number will require to go through this process in a one-year period.

- d) Board members commented that the plan should include consideration of fire ponds and equipment such as slurry tankers. Head of Land Management noted that fire ponds would be considered, as would an asset register including means of getting water to the front line of a fire.

16. The board noted the paper and the progress.

17. Action Points Arising:

- ii. The board member highlighted there was a need to clarify understanding of land holdings to help manage expectations and understanding for land managers.

Adoption of the Gaelic Language Plan 2024 - 28

18. Oliver Davies, Head of Communications and Engagement introduced the paper which summarises the results of a six-week consultation on our new Gaelic Language Plan 2024 - 28 and outlines changes made as a result of public feedback.

19. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- a) Board members congratulated the Communications team on their success on engaging with so many people, especially the younger population.
- b) Questions were raised regarding board member training to which Oliver Davies, Head of Communications and Engagement noted the board training would be a half-day session combining background into the Gaelic language and culture that would teach basic phrases and research and resources would be made available.
- c) A board member questioned the low response from local businesses and asked if this was related to the costs involved with translation. Head of Communications and Engagement highlighted that local translators are very affordable and noted that this is something they could communicate with local businesses.
- d) Some board members highlighted that they felt the funding for the Gaelic language plan seemed low and would like to see more invested in this in the future.

20. The Board adopted the language plan and noted the sizable response to the papers.

21. Action Points Arising:



- i. Share affordability of translation with local businesses.

Capercaillie Emergency Plan

22. Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change introduced a paper which sets out the scope of activity and overall funding strategy contained within the costed spatial plan i.e. Capercaillie Emergency Plan. Board members were asked to agree the elements of the Capercaillie Emergency Plan as presented in the paper.

23. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- a) Discussions were had around the amount of public money being spent on capercaillie conservation and whether the results were reflecting this. Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change noted that the public funding was not being spent solely on capercaillie but was delivering a wide range of public benefit, from which capercaillie benefitted. The CEO noted that public monies are from a range of existing sources. Park Authority budget specific to the project is relatively small with other funding comes from other organisations, private or charitable donations. Director of Nature and Climate Change noted that the money already invested will draw in third party investors. All costs are stated in the funding strategy.
- b) A board member raised concerns that there has not been as much capercaillie success and investigation should be done on reintroduction or translocation project. Director of Nature and Climate Change confirmed that this is not a straightforward process but noted the concern and, whilst currently referenced in the plan, this can be highlighted to reinforce the point.
- c) Board members questioned only receiving the contents page, Director of Nature and Climate Change noted the board were asked to consider the strategic aspect of the plan hence the scope of activity was included with the paper, not the detailed content of the plan as developed by expert stakeholders and academics.
- d) Discussions were had around the impact of pine martens and how can this be managed, if translocation or lethal control would be an option. The CEO noted that Scottish Government requested the Park Authority to produce the plan as scoped, which did not include pine marten control. Carrying out a survey to better understand the number of pine martens is the first step to investigating the practicalities, policy tests and principles which would need to be applied before the control of a protected species can take place. The Director of Nature and



Climate Change explained that reducing the impacts of predation is part of the scope of the plan and elements of this were included.

- e) Discussions were had around diversionary feeding, the Director of Nature and Climate Change highlighted that this was one of the four actions recommended by the scientific advisory committee to pursue in predator management. Recent, peer reviewed evidence shows that diversionary feeding resulted in 82.5% increase of nest survival.
- f) A board member requested a succinct summary of wider benefits of funding, e.g. expansion of woodland benefits of biodiversity

24. The Board noted the paper and content to support the recommendation with the key provisions that a pine marten survey is prioritised to provide an evidence base to take any actions to protect capercaillie and the Convener of the Board to write to the minister to reflect concerns expressed by the Board and ask for a discussion. Convener will give feedback to the Board when available.

25. Content on this basis.

26. Action Points Arising:

- i. Board Convener to write to the minister to prioritise a pine marten survey reflecting concerns expressed by the board and asking for a meeting.
- ii. Succinct summary of wider benefits of funding, e.g. expansion of woodland benefits of biodiversity

Board Committee Minutes

27. The board Convener introduced the paper that presents the approved minutes of the Resources Committee and Performance Committee.

28. The Board noted the minutes.

29. Action Points Arising: None

12.52, Kenny Deans left.

12.55, Kenny Deans returned.



30. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee gave an update to the board on the Committee's consideration of an internal audit report which had highlighted a number of urgent internal control improvements required to update the Park Authority's procurement controls noting that the Committee had agreed an action plan and that the committee will continue to review progress and update the board as necessary.

31. Action Points Arising: None

AOCB

None.

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Friday 13 September in person.

The meeting concluded at 12.56pm

Action	Status
Paper 1 – CEO Report	
At para 7 i. Ensure maintenance of signs and surroundings on granite markers entry points	
Paper 3 - Update on the Integrated Wildfire Management Plan	
At para 13 i. The board member suggested highlighted there was a need to clarify on land holdings to show expectations for land managers.	
Paper 4 – Gaelic Language Plan	
At para 16 i. Share affordability of translation with local businesses.	
Paper 5 - Capercaillie Emergency Plan	
At Para 20 i. Board Convener to write to the minister to prioritise a pine marten survey reflecting	



<p>concerns expressed by the board and asking for a meeting.</p> <p>ii. Succinct summary of wider benefits of funding, e.g. expansion of woodland benefits of biodiversity</p>	
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