



Minutes of the Formal Board Meeting

Held at Cairngorms National Park Authority office, Grantown on Spey

In Person

13 September 2024 at 10.00am

Present

Sandy Bremner (Convener)	Eleanor Mackintosh (Deputy Convener)
Chris Beattie	Jackie Brierton
Dr Peter Cosgrove	Kenny Deans
Dr Hannah Grist	Paul Gibb
John Kirk	Russell Jones
Bill Lobban	Dr Fiona McLean
Xander McDade	Duncan Miller
Ann Ross	

In Attendance

Grant Moir, Chief Executive Officer
David Cameron, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director of Corporate Services
Gavin Miles, Director of Planning and Place
Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change
Colin Simpson, Head of Visitor Services
Oliver Davies, Head of Communications and Engagement
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

Apologies:

Geva Blackett	Steve Micklewright
Lauren MacCallum	Derek Ross

Welcome and introduction

1. Sandy Bremner, the Board Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.



Approval of minutes of previous meetings

- The draft minutes of the last meeting held on the 28 June 2024 were agreed with no amendments.

Matters arising not covered elsewhere

- The Board Convener provided an update on the action points from 22 March and 28 June 2024 minutes:

ACTION	Status
Draft Minutes 22 March 2024	
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.	In hand
Update: Preliminary data received, staff capacity to progress is limited by vacancy in Agricultural Officer post. Recruitment for that post is about to begin.	

Action Points from the latest meeting on 28 June 2024:

Action	Status
Paper 1 – CEO Report	
At para 7 i. Ensure maintenance of signs and surroundings on granite markers entry points	In hand
Update: Glenlivet Marker was main issue as overgrown. Glenlivet Estate now undertaking maintenance	
Paper 3 - Update on the Integrated Wildfire Management Plan	
At para 13 ii. The board member suggested highlighted there was a need to clarify on land holdings to show expectations for land managers.	Completed
Update: A working definition is included in the draft plan	
Paper 4 – Gaelic Language Plan	



At para 16 iii. Share affordability of translation with local businesses.	In hand
Update: Olly Davies has emailed Craig Mills (CEO of the Cairngorms Business Partnership) with full information on translation services, and we have asked this to be included in an upcoming newsletter to partner businesses.	
Paper 5 - Capercaillie Emergency Plan	
At Para 20 iv. Board Convener to write to the minister to prioritise a pine marten survey reflecting concerns expressed by the board and asking for a meeting. v. Succinct summary of wider benefits of funding, e.g. expansion of woodland benefits of biodiversity	Completed
Completed	
Update: Meeting date set 9 October Included in the funding strategy	

Declarations of interest

4. There were no declarations of interest.

CEO Report (Paper 1)

5. Grant Moir, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), 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. He highlighted the following.
- a) Due to there being budget restrictions imposed by Scottish Government, the Cairngorms National Park will not receive nature restoration funding this financial year. The mitigation plans will be brought before the Resources Committee on 4 October 2024.
 - b) On 4 December the Scottish Government budget will be announced, and the intention is for a board discussion to take place following the planning committee meeting on 13 December 2024 to discuss implications for the Authority.



6. The Board Convener praised the success of the careers fair in which over 400 young people had attended.
7. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Praise was expressed for the extent of activities undertaken by the board convener and noted that it was great to know that he had been getting out and about on behalf of the board.
 - b) A member suggested a board session be scheduled to allow members to reflect, consider and adopt the organisational values.
 - c) A member queried the traffic management proposals presented to the Braemar community council and sought clarification around the funding. Would it be available for something else should the community reject the proposals or had the money been ringfenced? Colin Simpson, Head of Visitor Services advised that Aberdeenshire council were now handling this work although the Park Authority had handled the first two stages during the Cairngorms 2030 development phase. The third stage will be handled by Aberdeenshire council themselves. He confirmed that the Park Authority had not set aside any funding for this work in Braemar.
 - d) Could it be confirmed that wider discussions were taking place with Scotrail to make it easier for people to get to the National Park and enjoy it, particularly those travelling with bicycles? CEO confirmed that the majority of visitors will still arrive by car in the future, but wider discussions were taking place with train and bus companies. He added that the main focus of the Park Authority was the movement of visitors once they arrived at the national park and providing the right facilities and access points.
 - e) A member asked if any thought had been given into how the Park authority can maintain our profile while reducing our spend on the communications and engagement front? CEO advised that the Park Authority still have their communications team but have less money to put into events. He added that the November edition of the resident's magazine would still be taking place. He explained that content would still be possible and what would not be possible was the ability to directly target audiences. He said he hoped that this would be short term.
 - f) A member asked if it would be possible at future board meeting to get some overview of the Cairngorms 2030 project? CEO advised that the Performance Committee are regularly presented with papers for their meetings on that. And that all board members can access the meeting papers on the Board portal.



8. The Board noted the Paper. The Convener thanked the Chief Executive and all staff on behalf of the Board.
9. **Action Point Arising:**
 - i. **Board session to be scheduled to allow members to reflect, consider and adopt the organisational values.**

National Park Partnership Plan (Paper 2)

10. Gavin Miles, Director of Planning and Place introduced the paper which summarises the monitoring framework for the National Park Partnership Plan and identifies some of the key areas where indicators show progress or where officers expect progress to be demonstrated in future after the second year of delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan.
11. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Praise expressed for the volume and range of activities carried out.
 - b) C10 - Disappointment expressed that the work on creating a cultural heritage network had not yet begun. Director of Planning and Place advised that the intention was to do that work this financial year but warned the current financial restrictions were likely to have an impact.
 - c) A1 - A member asked about the methodology on calculating carbon emissions and net zero. Director of Planning and Place advised that he would circulate the report undertaken by the experts at Small World Consulting which provides the level of detail being asked for.
 - d) 22C – a member queried the methodology for calculating the baseline emissions. Director of Planning and Place directed the member to the report which he would circulate after the meeting.
 - e) A member asked if the monitoring report carried out by the experts would be published on the National Park Authority's website. Director of Planning and Place confirmed that it would.
 - f) A member commented that while the report appeared quite positive there must be areas of work that were not progressing well that the board should scrutinise. Director of Planning and Place explained that the report was to the end of the second year of delivery of a five year programme of work and longer term outcomes, so hadn't identified significant issues. However, he noted that there were areas of risk emerging in the third year of delivery and expected the next reporting on progress to highlight them. CEO added that the budget



announcement on 4 December 2024 would have a big impact on what could be delivered and specifically there was risk around funding for peatland and nature restoration.

- g) Plea made not to wait until next year to look at what was at danger of not being delivered. Board Convener agreed and advised that a horizon scanning session had been scheduled following the next formal board meeting.
- h) With reference to item B8 – A member commented that the Green Health Referrals work was a great initiative and asked if there was a target number for people being referred. Director of Planning and Place advised that it was a pioneering new project, and that the health service did not have a target number.
- i) In follow up to B8 – A member asked if funding for this work was cut would other organisations take it on? Director of Planning and Place advised that this was not at risk as the work was part of C2030 funding.
- j) Request made that future report included more of a traffic light system to explain progress and risk and Director of Planning and Place agreed to do so.

12. The Board noted the Paper.

13. Action Points Arising:

- i. **Future report on carbon footprint to be circulated to the Board and published on the web**
- ii. **Future updates to include more detailed traffic light ratings to clearly show activities at risk of being delivered.**

Seasonal Fire Management Byelaw (Paper 3)

14. Sandy Bremner, the Convener reiterated the Board's position that a byelaw was only being pursued very reluctantly, and only after all other options had been exhausted.

15. Grant Moir, CEO introduced the paper which sets out the wording for the seasonal fire management byelaw that will be consulted on subject to board approval for 12 weeks starting on 23 September 2024. Following that consultation members will be asked in January 2025 to agree the final wording for submission to Scottish Ministers for approval.

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

- a) Request made to ensure when put out to public consultation it is written in plain English so that people will understand. CEO confirmed that the consultation



document would be in plain English but also advised that the legal wording would have to be consulted on.

- b) A member asked if a ranger was alerted to muirburn taking place by a non-license holder what would happen? CEO advised that the ranger would report it to NatureScot who would investigate it.
- c) A member queried if NatureScot have enforcement powers for unlicensed muirburn? CEO advised that NatureScot will licence muirburn and that this will come into force next year. CEO agreed to look further into it and come back to the board on that point.
- d) How was it possible to know when Scottish Fire and Rescue Service called a period of high risk? CEO advised that it would be published on the new wildfire forum website.
- e) Could it be confirmed if this byelaw would impact licensed caravan and camp sites and informal areas? Director of Planning and Place confirmed that it should not impact these smaller businesses negatively where they are licenced. He added that this could be picked up in the summary overview.
- f) It was reemphasized that the Cairngorms National Park Authority have not gone into having a byelaw lightly. This National Park Authority have avoided getting a byelaw for the last 20 years and have done so as a last resort, in response to community feedback.

17. Board member, Paul Gibb expressed his dissent on the basis that he was not comfortable with the enforceability of the byelaw and lack of visibility of plans which need to be put in place to support enforcement and therefore could not support it at this time.

18. The Board agreed the wording of the fire management byelaw for a 12-week statutory consultation as per the National Park (Scotland) Act 2000.

19. Action Points Arising:

- i. **CEO to look into the enforcement powers of NatureScot regarding muirburn and report these back to the Board.**

Code of conduct addition (Paper 4)

20. David Cameron, Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services introduced the paper which seeks to update the Park Authority's Code of Conduct with additions based on the provisions for quasi-judicial and regulatory activities and decision making approved by the Standards Commission for Scotland in the model code for councillors. The paper seeks to ensure the Park Authority's code of conduct is



appropriate to the range of activities and decisions undertaken by Park Authority members using provisions already approved by the Standards Commission and supported by existing guidance.

Eleanor Mackintosh left the room at 11.14 am

21. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and the following was posed:

- a) With regards to stakeholder engagement had it been brought to governance Committee before coming to the board? Deputy CEO confirmed that it had.

22. The Board:

- a) Approved the proposed additional provisions set out in Annex 1 to the paper for inclusion in the Park Authority's Code of Conduct.
- b) Agreed the submission of the updated Code of Conduct to Scottish Ministers for approval.

23. Action Point Arising: None.

Standing Orders: Election of Planning Committee Deputy Convener (Paper 5)

24. David Cameron, Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services introduced the paper which notifies the board of the Planning Committee Deputy Convener's upcoming end of term of appointment and of the election process for this role.

25. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and the following point of clarity was requested:

- a) The current Standing Order provision relied on the vote taking place in person and allows candidates to give an in-person statement. Could it be agreed that the statement(s) is/are made public? Deputy CEO confirmed that it had been the process for some time to make the candidate statements public to replicate in person meetings and he had forgotten to include it in the paper. He went on to explain when there are multiple candidates then the statements are made public on Cairngorms National Park Authority website.

Eleanor Mackintosh returned at 11.18 am

26. Eleanor Mackintosh, current Planning Committee Deputy Convener made the following points:



- a) Not standing again for deputy Planning Committee Convener
- b) Would be happy to chat to anyone considering standing about what the role entails

27. Sandy Bremner, Board Convener thanked Eleanor Mackintosh for her contribution in the position of Planning Committee Deputy Convener.

28. The Board agreed the process for election of the Planning Committee Deputy Convener, as set out in this paper.

29. Action Point Arising: None.

There was a short comfort break until 11.35am

Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2019 – 2024 final report (Paper 6)

30. Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change introduced the paper which presents the report detailing delivery of priorities, actions and targets in the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2019 – 2024, for approval prior to publication. It considers the role of the Cairngorms Nature partnership as the key mechanism directing and delivering conservation in the National Park and the National Park Partnership Plan nature objectives.

31. The Board Convener praised the incredible record of achievement that the publication demonstrates.

32. Chris Beattie, Chair of the Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group praised the positive report as it demonstrates the challenge of working within the context of external factors that affect landscapes, habitats and species. He added that he was looking forward to the next reiteration of work over the next strategy

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

- a) Congratulations to staff and partners on the strategy group who have managed to show progress.
- b) Suggestion made that in the future it would be good to be able to articulate the threats associated with climate change, for example the impacts on rivers or to tease out which species climate change threatens. Director of Nature and Climate Change agreed.



- c) Comment made that it was a positive report which provides a lot of material to go forward with. A suggestion for more direct engagement with the business community and more socio-economic information could be provided around the impact on how it has benefited or provided challenges on local business in the community. Director of Nature and Climate Change agreed that both the direct and indirect benefits could be included in the next report.
- d) A comment made around nature disturbance specifically nesting times, should be included in a future report. Director of Nature and Climate Change agreed and commented that had been a key learning from the Capercaillie Project. He went on to advise that it was included in the Active Cairngorms action plan. CEO added that the Active Cairngorms annual update report would be brought to the next board meeting.
- e) A member queried the timescale for the next plan, should it not be more seamless? Director of Nature and Climate Change explained that the delay was because there is legislative and policy change at present which would then need to be incorporated to ensure accurate representation of them.
- f) A member raised concern on the river Dee which contains freshwater pearl mussels while supplying the city of Aberdeen and Deeside with water. Concern was expressed on the negative effect it was having on the species and asked what could be done to protect the species. Director of Nature and Climate Change explained that rather than looking at species conservation in isolation, they need to look at the resilience of the ecosystem He added that they try to align organisational and species-specific outcomes with the issues of ecosystem resilience, for example for the translocation of species to be successful, it is necessary to make sure the habitat is restored before that
- g) With reference to pine hover fly, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) should be mentioned? Director of Nature and Climate Change confirmed that it had been an oversight and agreed to add it in.

34. The Board noted the key achievements of the partnership and delivery against targets and approve the publication of the report.

35. Action Points Arising: None.

Board Committee Minutes (Paper 7)

36. David Cameron introduced the paper which presents the minutes from previous Committee meetings for the Board to note.

37. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and raised the following point:



- a) Should the planning committee minutes be included in this pack? Deputy CEO advised that for completeness and in responding to audit recommendations officers decided to put them in. Deputy CEO welcomed board views and would take that through governance committee on whether to keep them.

38. The Board noted the Paper.

39. Action Point Arising:

- i. **Governance Committee to consider and decide whether Planning Committee minutes should be included in this paper going forward.**

AOCB

40. None.

Date of Next Meeting

41. The date of the next meeting is 22 November 2024 in person.

42. *The meeting concluded at 11.54 am*