

INCLUSIVE CAIRNGORMS

**Minutes of the meeting held on 14th April 2016
at 11.00am in CNPA office, Grantown-on-Spey with video link to Ballater**

Present:

In Grantown:

Anne MacLean (chair)	Mobility and Access Committee Scotland
Maggie Lawson	B&S Community Transport Company
Ivor Souter	Highland Council
Ruaridh Ormiston	Newtonmore Riding Centre
Elizabeth Edmonson	Cairngorms Riding for the Disabled
Dawn Macdonald	Cairngorms Riding for the Disabled
Hector MacDonald	Scottish Disability Equality Forum
Anne Dempster	Strath Sunshine Club
Donna Thompson	Hostelling Scotland
Gregor Rimmell	CNPA Board
Grant Moir	CNPA
Adam Streeter-Smith	CNPA
Elsbeth Grant	CNPA
Alan Smith	CNPA
Kate Christie	CNPA
Jane Richardson	CNPA (minutes)

In Ballater:

Eric Baird (vice chair)	Cairngorms Ranger Services
Kevin Hutchens	Independent Social Worker

Apologies:

Jane Cox	COAT Walking to Health
Morag Campbell	B&S Access Panel
Sandra South	B&S Access Panel
David Atkinson	Scottish Churches Rural Group
Carolyn Cornfield	Caberfeidh Horizons
Liz Scott	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Maggie MacAlpine	Crathie Opportunity Holidays
Alasdair Johnston	NP resident
Glyn Jones	Balmoral Ranger Services
Vittoria Hancock	Scottish Churches Rural Group

Welcome and Apologies

- I. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made and apologies noted. EB advised Glyn Jones (Balmoral Ranger Service) would be happy to join the Group as the second ranger representative, but could not attend today. The Group agreed this.

Minutes of Last Meeting

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 25th November 2015 were approved subject to the following amendments:
 - Ref para 16: EB was misrepresented in his comment regarding land ownership impacting negatively on the community with regards to development. The minutes to be amended to reflect that “if it was the case that land ownership impacted negatively then one aspect of the Land Reform Bill is intended to address it.”
 - Ref para 33, 2nd last sentence: Minute to be amended to: “EB commented that people with disabilities were under-represented in the Visitor Survey”.

Matters arising from the Minutes

3. Ref para 3: EG to contact Ian Cooper regarding training. **Action EG.**
4. Ref para 9, bullet point 1: EG to email and post details on migrant workers to KH. **Action EG.**
5. Ref para 9, bullet point 2: EG circulated the Community Transport Survey to the Group. IS to advise AM regarding the response received to the Survey in due course.
6. Ref para 11: EG advised HMacD was nominated to sit as an advisor to the Design Awards on accessibility to provide a useful way of incorporating inclusion into the Awards and also to feed into and identify examples that showcase good practice in terms of access design.
7. Ref para 25: EB advised the Cambus O’May Bridge has been damaged and is now to be surveyed by an engineer who will also look at the turnstiles (as well as repairing the bridge) and suggested perhaps they could be constructed to a more equalities standard. AQSS noted this request.
8. Para 26: Cairngorm Mountain: EG has sent a letter to Natural Retreats (on behalf of the Group) highlighting access and inclusion matters and offering to be involved in the next stages of the planning application.
9. Para 27 – 36: Cairngorm & Glenmore Project: EG advised the response has been circulated to the Group and to Pete Crane. The next stage is the consultation report will go the CNPA Board in June where the next steps will be considered.
10. Ref para 34: IS updated - only 4 bus shelters are now to be put in. This is due to ground work issues and the proposed location not being suitable to local residents.
11. Ref para 42: EG has contacted SDEF to obtain the DVD on disability awareness to possibly show at a future meeting.
12. Ref para 47: EG advised GR will discuss nominating a deputy with the Board. **Action: GR.**

13. Ref para 48: EG reported on behalf of Heather (who could not attend today) on what is happening with A Park For All. There is currently a lot of good work going on in terms of low income groups and disability. Officers are looking at adding a new page on the website “Cairngorms on a shoestring” which will have information on travelling here on a budget. Good work is being done with the Ranger Services and with partners through Backbone’s Community Leadership Programme which supports multi-cultural groups to learn about and access the countryside. Health walks are taking place in most communities across the park. Easy access leaflets and abilities trails cater for people with disabilities. EB welcomed this and commented it is good to see a commitment to redress the balance.

**Guest speaker: – Donna Thompson, Scottish Youth Hostels Association – SYHA
Inclusion Programmes**

14. Donna gave a brief overview of the SYHA and her presentation was circulated. In particular Donna stressed how partnership working is key. Donna noted the range of youth programmes and the work SYHA do with Join Muir Award through Loch Lomond, that they hope to replicate in the Cairngorms. SYHA are working with (and provide discounts to) partners, and share information to help keep the SYHA visible in the community. SYHA have 120,000 people signed up to their monthly newsletter. SYHA have worked with EG to promote the CNPA’s Transport Grants and have worked with Rangers to support young people to access the outdoors. Donna noted the Youth Active Grant which can fund up to 45% of accommodation costs - to support and include young people who could not afford to or would not have had the opportunity to come.
15. AM asked if hard copies of the newsletter are produced. Donna advised no but can be printed off if required.
16. AM asked if the rooms had vibrating fire alarms for the deaf. Donna advised yes some do and it is being done in conjunction with the rollout of refurbishments. Donna advised staff are trained on disability awareness and have a basic understanding.
17. RO said it was good to see the commitment but it is a shame there is no longer a hostel in Kingussie. Donna reminded SYHA are a not for profit organisation and do not get support from the government so some tough decisions had to be made.
18. KH commented he was impressed with the range of programmes and asked how the SYHA publicise and promote the programmes and asked if organisations around the Park help to do this? Donna advised they make leaflets with application forms visible through hostels, mail out to schools and youth groups and partners, their own website etc. Donna welcomed any help to promote the SYHA, especially the Youth Active Grant.
19. KH asked how the Volunteer Programme is inclusive. Donna advised they have moved away from running hostels for volunteering, to working with a German agency who arrange for 12 volunteers to come for a year and work in various locations doing different things around Scotland. They also have Swedish volunteers. Through their Life and Employment Skills programme they work with business volunteers from Scottish Power.

20. AM suggested targeting the Scottish Youth Parliament (they already have) and Highland Youth Voice. Contact details were passed to Donna.
21. AQSS noted that the Give Us A Break programme is only offered by Cairngorm Lodge within the CNP, and asked if the programme could be extended to affiliate hostels in Tomintoul and Braemar? Donna advised in the first instance they focus on key hostels although they do support affiliate sites. The reason it works so well at Cairngorm Lodge is having activity providers locally, such as Loch Morlich watersports – this is crucial.
22. AS suggested he could help to get such groups involved with John Muir Awards. AS commented there is no mention of John Muir Award in the Give Us A Break brochure. Donna advised when the application comes in there is a box to tick regarding getting involved with JMA but agreed this should be included in a reprint of the brochure. Donna welcomed AS's offer of help.
23. GR raised the Cairngorms and Glenmore Project and suggested liaising with SYHA for their feedback from customers on it. GM advised that there has been a lot of joint work done by Highlife Highland, SYHA and Forestry Commission to look at new facilities, including visitor surveys. There is a real opportunity for increasing capacity, but a lot of investment would be required to rebuild the facility to standard. RO asked if there are still plans to demolish the youth hostel and was advised yes although costs associated with the building works are high.

Future direction of Inclusive Cairngorms and meetings - discussion

24. EG asked for comments from the Group regarding future format and the number of meetings in light of the demolition works starting in August for the new extension of the office and the decline in attendance. It was suggested reducing to 2 meetings a year and include a site visit to look at sites around the NP focussing on accessibility.

Suggestions included:

- AM suggested Grantown Museum as a possible site visit and will look into whether they have meeting space.
 - Extending the site visit to incorporate a meeting if there is any current business to consider. This was endorsed by KH and EB.
 - Meeting in Deeside, perhaps Aboyne Academy with a site visit to Glen Tanar. EB would be happy to host an accessible site visit in September 2017.
 - RO suggested the Highland Folk Museum.
 - IS suggested more themed meetings i.e. asking transport providers to come along and demonstrate their accessible vehicles and to discuss issues around transporting people about the Park, mobility and getting about to raise awareness. ML endorsed this and would like to be involved.
25. EE (RDA) raised the issues carers have all around the Park regarding drop kerbs. Although the walk may be accessible, how the people are taken out of the back of the vehicle and

then how they get back up onto the kerb is big issue and in reality makes them nearly impossible to access. Liz felt this should be highlighted to Highland Council. It was agreed this is a big problem.

26. GM suggested there may be an opportunity to host a joint Inclusive Cairngorms / Cairngorms Business Partnership business breakfast to look at ways to develop business's websites and facilities to cater for the disability market. Everyone welcomed this. ML requested she be involved. EG to look into this. **Action: EG.**
27. The Group agreed to note the paper and take on board the ideas around the table and to see how it progresses.

CNPA Public Duties (standing item)

Outdoor Access: new Path grading scheme (Adam Streeter-Smith)

28. AQSS updated on a programme of work to revisit the community paths leaflets in the NP to bring route descriptions up to a new standard using a path grading format which has been developed nationally between the Forestry Commission, Paths for All and SNH. It is a simple system based on a consistent way of surveying paths. It is being rolled out across the Forestry Commission Estate and the rest of the NP in due course. Paths will be graded as all abilities, easy, moderate or strenuous with a description, distance and time. CNPA will revise path leaflets using the new format as / when they are due to be reprinted. Laggan leaflet is currently being trialled followed by Boat of Garten and Strathdon, subject to funding. Ranger Services have been trained in path grading.
29. RO queried the new Newtonmore Path leaflet. AQSS advised it had been published prior to this system so when it comes up for reprint it will be drafted in this format.
30. There was discussion around surface condition and AQSS advised there has been a change in what it means by 'all abilities' and there is new National Guidance that pins it down so it is clear when you can use a wheelchair symbol on a path and what it means. Unfortunately it means that many paths previously identified as 'all abilities' will not meet the new standard. The challenge will be to ensure paths are maintained to the new standard.
31. AM commented all abilities should be granite dust or gravel dust as it is by far most accessible, but noted it is also costly.
32. EB asked about monitoring the paths with regard to their effectiveness to those who use the paths, and will feedback be requested? AQSS advised the Paths with Easy Access Guide provides the opportunity for people to feedback on issues and going forward staff will liaise with communities for feedback. Officers are keen to work with path managers to ensure that paths are maintained at their grade. EB suggested Group members use the paths and feedback to AQSS.
33. RO raised the 'Park on a Shoestring' leaflet – this will be a good addition.

34. AD said there were no Grantown Paths leaflets or Paths for Easy Access in Aviemore Tourist Office. It was noted that they do need to tell us if they run out so we can provide them with more. AQSS to action this. **Action: AQSS.**
35. ML advised that the Tourist Office have said they were unsure if they had room to display the B&SAP new guide and permission now needs to be sought from Richard Gilling (who did resolve the matter). RO said this is because they have had to give over much of their space to merchandise to help sustain them.

Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF): update (Adam Streeter-Smith)

36. AQSS advised there are discussions ongoing regarding restructuring the LOAF meetings to reduce the numbers per year. Looking forward, the NPPP consultation will form a key point of the agenda.
37. EB advised they are looking to reduce but do not want to lose the effectiveness of the Forum and stressed it is up to members to use the Forum as a place to raise access issues generic to the community, as there have been concerns regarding under-representation.

Planning: update on recent consultations

38. EG to circulate responses to applications on Grantown homes and the Wigwams application. **Action: EG.**

Equalities:

National Park Partnership Plan (Grant Moir)

39. GM explained this will be the CNP's 3rd Park Plan. The document governs all public bodies that work within the Park in terms of their approach on a range of issues. The development of the Plan is using a 'main issues' type approach – there are 9 big issues to think about - the one relevant to this group is learning and inclusion. An A3 sheet of the draft key issues and the big questions around learning and inclusion was passed round as an example. It is hoped they will generate a good discussion during the consultation period - 27th June to 30th September. Thereafter the information gained from the consultation will be worked on with partners throughout the autumn, with the aim of presenting to Ministers in March / April 2017 for sign off. The aim is to try to get people to think slightly wider on what the main things we should be focusing on in the next 5 years. More information will be coming out online, social media etc.
40. GM suggested the NPPP consultation be included on the Agenda for the Inclusive Cairngorms meeting in September (after the site visit) to discuss the specific section on learning and inclusion.
41. AM welcomed this, noting that the paper includes a full spectrum of what Inclusive Cairngorms covers and it is good the Group will have an opportunity to feed into it. EB welcomed this and added it is good to see inclusiveness embedded as principle in the Plan. KH welcomed and asked for hard copy of visitor figures that relate to it. GM advised he will send that round nearer the time as it is in draft and is not publically available but

disability figures for the park (which was part of Heather's presentation) can be circulated now. **Action: EG**

Volunteer Cairngorms (Alan Smith)

42. AS circulated a paper that sets out proposals for volunteering in the CNP. The key aim is to get people involved in environmental volunteering in their immediate area and to get more people involved in managing the Park. Consultation started in 2013 and involved discussions with people involved in volunteering - what they are doing, future opportunities, and potential barriers in regards to environmental volunteering. The model proposed has been tried and tested in other NPs in the UK and is being used in Loch Lomond – a Volunteering Co-ordinator is employed to co-ordinate activity through the volunteer rangers. Key to this working is recognising that there are a lot of organisations who have activities that volunteers could get involved in. eg through Community Planning, the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan, and local land owners who want to engage with their local community. It has been identified that there is a need for a co-ordinating role and the plan is to take this burden off people and provide that service. When the Volunteer Coordinator is in post they will work with the community and liaise with land owners to find out what can be done. It was noted that funding has been secured for the post and an application has been made to LEADER for operational costs. Recruitment will take place by late summer / early autumn .
43. AS asked members for advice on:
- The best channels for promoting environmental opportunities to under-represented groups;
 - Suggestions for environmental activities suitable for wide range of abilities and backgrounds
 - Interest from members able to offer volunteering opportunities.
44. RO passed the information onto RSBP at Insh Marshes for Karen and Pete to follow up. RO last week started a group called the Wranglers to help out at the stables which is an excellent opportunity for the Volunteers to get involved with. RO to send more details to EG. **Action RO.**
45. The Chair suggested contacting the Anagach Woods Trust.
46. KH asked if disclosure and references would be sought and was advised yes those recruited will be trained to the appropriate standards in terms of safety management and disclosure.
47. Any further comments should be emailed to EG who will pass on to AS.

CNPA accommodation

48. EG advised Inclusive Cairngorms had provided feedback to CNPA on accessibility of the new office extension which incorporated comments on physical space and accessibility of

the building. The Steering Group has taken on board those comments and has fed back to the architect who have said that most of the disability access issues are covered by Building Regulations. Furniture, internal fittings, surfaces and decoration are part of the next stage. The Steering Group are keen to have involvement from Inclusive Cairngorms on the next steps and EG will attend the next meeting to see how usefully the Group can contribute to that process.

49. HMacD stressed that technically the designs comply with Building Standards but pointed out that we should aim for flat access into the building rather than having an outside ramp, and we should be looking for best practice and not basic standards. EG to get an update from the architect to see what has been addressed and to talk to the Centre for Accessible Environments for best practice. EG to liaise with HMacD on what happens next. **Action EG.**
50. GM advised that CNPA are tenants to Seafield Estate who own the building and will have budget restrictions but agreed there are different aspects to this and there has to be a balance between costs and best practice.
51. EG advised the Accommodation Group are keen to look at improving accessibility in the Ballater office as the disabled access is poor.

LEADER / Local Action Group Update (Eric Baird)

52. The website is up and running and the programme process is in place. The LAG would like Inclusive Cairngorms to be engaged and to let them know if the website works or if the programme content is appropriate, is it friendly enough for people to engage with? The LAG would welcome any feedback from the Group.
53. GM advised 20% of the overall budget has to go to businesses so there is an opportunity for businesses to think about the inclusive side of things and use LEADER funding to help them.

Young People (standing item)

54. There were no items to report.

Disability (standing item)

55. AM advised the Mobility Access Committee for Scotland are about to recruit 5 posts and also her post as convenor comes to an end this year. AM encouraged the Group to give this consideration and welcomed anyone who wanted further information to contact her. Tel: 01479 872812. GM to circulate these vacancies to the Group and Board Members.

Low Income (standing item)

56. KH asked if any work was being done on the implications of benefit changes particularly regarding the tax credit system in the NP. GM advised this is not a bit of work that can be done as it is done on a Council basis and Scottish Government stats would not be cut up for the NP in that way.

AOCB

57. AQSS highlighted the event for health walk leaders in the NP on 26th April to celebrate their work in support of the delivery of the Health Walk Programme.

58. GM advised the Cairngorms Nature Festival takes place on 14th and 15th May, the programme is on the website and there are some great events going on all across the Park - Nick Baker is coming back too.

59. AM reminded the Group that they will need to appoint another Chair and Vice-chair this year and to give this consideration.

Date of next meeting

60. TBC – September to incorporate site visit and meeting dedicated to the NPPP Consultation.

The next meeting has now been confirmed for Thursday 8th September at 10.30am at the Grantown Museum, followed by a meeting at the Grant Arms Hotel including lunch and refreshments.

**Elsbeth Grant
CNPA**