
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at the Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey on Friday 15th February 2013 at 10.30am

PRESENT

Peter Argyle	John Latham
Duncan Bryden (Convener)	Bill Lobban
Angela Douglas	Eleanor Mackintosh
Dave Fallows	Willie McKenna
Katrina Farquhar	Fiona Murdoch
Jeanette Gaul	Gordon Riddler
David Green	Gregor Rimell
Kate Howie	Brian Wood
Gregor Hutcheon	

In Attendance:

David Cameron	Gavin Miles
Pete Crane	Claire Ross
Murray Ferguson	Hamish Trench
Jane Hope	Francoise van Buuren

Apologies:

Martin Price
Mary McCafferty

Welcome and Introduction

1. Duncan Bryden opened the meeting, noting with great sadness the death the previous day of Alistair Highet, the Head of Finance and IT. He had been the lynchpin of the CNPA's effective management of its finances. He left four sons and a wife to whom everyone extended their deepest sympathies. He would be much missed. The Board's proceedings paused for one minute's silence out of respect.
2. Duncan also noted that three people had been killed in an avalanche the previous day, a reminder of the dangers that were part and parcel of going into the mountains.

Anything the CNPA could do to ensure people understood the dangers and were equipped to deal with it, should be done.

Minutes of Last Meeting – Approval

3. The minutes of the meeting on 21st December were approved with no changes.

Matters Arising

4. Following up Paragraph 31, it was agreed that there should be a further Board discussion about putting in place arrangements to ensure transparency and clarity on how individual Board Members were deployed to attend events on behalf of the CNPA.
5. Paragraph 15(a): the note in respect of the 10th Anniversary Logo was correct as discussed at the Board Meeting; (subsequently it had been reported that the 10th Anniversary logo was beyond the point of being changed).

Declarations of Interest

6. None

Communications and Engagement Strategy Progress Report (Paper 1)

7. David Green declared an indirect interest in respect of the Big Lottery Fund.
8. Francoise van Buuren introduced the paper which updated the Board on progress in delivering the Communications and Engagement Strategy agreed in January 2012 and outlined the Action Plan for 2013/14. The aim of the Strategy was to continue to raise awareness, a sense of closeness, and a sense of responsibility towards the Park. The report provided an update on progress towards these outcomes. It had been agreed to focus efforts on establishing champions for the Park so that they could play their part in helping to promote the Park and its achievements.
9. Independent surveys and other monitoring mechanisms were presented, showing that good progress had been made, particularly with politicians, visitors and residents across the UK. The programme for 2013/14 would capitalise on the Year of Natural Scotland and the Park's 10th Anniversary to create a legacy of:
 - a) Stronger relationships with partners and stakeholders,
 - b) Added value through the development of the Park Brand particularly with local businesses,
 - c) An increased number of Park champions to share their stories about the Park,
 - d) An enhanced events programme and support materials,

- e) A deeper emotional connection with the Park that encouraged people to get more involved in enjoying and caring for the Park.

10. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) The CNPA was funding Rangers, they should be going into schools.
- b) Visiting schools raised awareness but it was important to follow up with work that then allowed engagement. It was essential to be working with schools. It was pointed out the CNPA already had a very strong schools programme but the paper was focussing on the communications element of that.
- c) Engaging was about exciting people. Board Members and staff had to add value to what else was happening.
- d) It was important not to lose sight of what had been done already.
- e) We should consider tapping into the volunteer network of LINK members.
- f) The Angus Ranger Services went into schools to raise awareness and they would be happy to work with the CNPA in this respect.
- g) The paper was not exciting enough.
- h) The Cairngorms Brand had great potential. Merrell (major footwear company with a turnover of £1.3billion) would be attending the next brand development group. Merrell already worked with the Association of National Park Authorities for the UK, and it was hoped they could work specifically with the CNPA as well.
- i) There had been an immediate and good reaction to the CNPA's gesture of providing funding from its "Good Causes Fund". It was not a huge amount of money, but the reaction was a good indication of the degree of connection this had made.
- j) In respect of Annex 4 the question was raised whether Board Members should be on the various partnerships, e.g. CBP. It was noted Cairngorms Nature should be added to the list.
- k) There was room for improvement in the style of communicating, focusing on the repeating important points and developing a more punchy style.
- l) There was still a long way to go in using others, including Board Members. It was important to encourage people to interact face to face, not simply through emails and writing.
- m) Real engagement would be getting schools to come into their National Park. This was something the CNPA had promoted in the past. The current Outdoor Learning Project had been doing exactly that, building confidence in teachers to bring pupils into the National Park and use it for teaching. Through the project, the CNPA were looking to address transport which was often the barrier to schools coming out into the Park.
- n) Pin Badges might be useful for Board Members in identifying themselves as CNPA Members.

11. The Chief Executive commented:

- a) The paper focused on progress against outcomes – there had been little steer from the Board on the results presented in the paper so it was difficult to know how to evaluate them. While one could always improve, the results generally appeared good.
- b) There was therefore a judgement to make about whether resources were being deployed effectively, whether effort was being directed in the right way, and whether more resources were needed.
- c) It was important to put performance in perspective. The CNP had come into existence in 2003 to a barrage of hostile media coverage about Park boundaries. Against that background of hostility and suspicion, good progress had been made in 10 years.
- d) The Communications and Engagement Strategy had been approved, and provided the building blocks and the focus for the work being outlined in the Board paper. The purpose of the Board paper was not to be “exciting” but to give clarity to the Board.

12. The Convener summarised as follows:

- a) It was important to stay focused on outcomes, and the evidence base for delivery against these.
- b) While no organisation could sit on its laurels, it was important to note what had been achieved.
- c) Areas flagged up in discussion were engagement, relationships, ambition and incentive. A small working group to work alongside the Communications team on a regular basis to ensure the work plan was well founded on the right building blocks would be useful.

13. The Board agreed the recommendations of the paper as follows:

- a) **Noted the progress made to date;**
- b) **Agreed the Communications and Engagement Programme for 2013/14;**
- c) **Confirmed that Members were happy to give presentations to schools within, as well as out of the Park and support the 2013/14 Events Programme as set out in Annex 5 (Claire Ross to coordinate Member activity in relation to schools);**
- d) **Agreed to set up a small working group of Members to work with staff to ensure “the building blocks of the C&E Programme are right”. Members Angela Douglas, Gregor Rimell, Gregor Hutcheon, Brian Wood, Willie McKenna volunteered to sit on the Group.**

CNPA Approach to Cultural Heritage (Paper 2)

14. Claire Ross introduced the paper which updated the Board on the breadth of work that the CNPA had undertaken over recent years in relation to cultural heritage, and set

out a clear approach to such work to help deliver the National Park Partnership Plan and the CNPA Corporate Plan in the future.

15. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) The paper was welcomed.
- b) There was cultural heritage and cultural history; there was a danger that the latter was ignored. It was important to include the relatively recent aspects of society within cultural heritage.
- c) There was a lot of enthusiasm locally. A small fund was very welcome and should be supported. It was noted that the Board would be content for some flexibility in respect of this fund going above the prescribed £10,000.
- d) It was important that the cultural heritage was reflected in Shovel Ready projects (it was noted that this already was).
- e) The Kingussie project had been community led using the site of the old museum. The CNPA had supported this but its communications had really not made enough of this support.
- f) The CNPA could not dictate to communities what was their heritage.
- g) The idea of using CDOs was good but it was important to understand the ground rules so that we did not end up in a situation with the CNPA doing and attending everything.
- h) It would be useful to have a database of all the funding that was available for cultural heritage projects.
- i) It was important to keep up the liaison with the Trust set up by Highland Council (High Life) as there may be opportunities for joint working.
- j) Many communities set up local history groups and their enthusiasm got translated into projects. It was important to create opportunities for them to come together and share experience across the Park.
- k) The cultural heritage conference organised recently by the CNPA should be repeated.
- l) It was good that the paper illustrated the CNPA's ability to move on, in as much as success was represented by the move from one fulltime member of staff to help get the project going, through to a situation where communities were more self sufficient. This approach in which successful projects moved to the next phase had also been seen with the Land Based Business Training Project.
- m) It would be helpful to look at the experience of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in framing questions to set the criteria for projects that will achieve the desired outcomes when communities take on the responsibility for the projects themselves (and the funding applications).
- n) A contemporary heritage was important and was something which industries such as the Skiing industry could build effectively into their own PR. A recent example of course had been the celebration on Olympians.

16. **The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:**
- a) **Endorsed the CNPA's approach to supporting cultural heritage as set out;**
 - b) **Approved a small fund to help provide community groups with specialist cultural heritage advice.**

2013/14 Budget and Operational Plan (Paper 3)

17. David Cameron gave a brief overview of the highlights which included:
- a) A reduction of Grant-in-Aid of £80,000;
 - b) An ongoing cost increase including 3% inflation, and a pay award in line with Scottish Government's pay guidelines;
 - c) A programme overspend which had been reduced from £150,000 in the Corporate Plan to £100,000 in the Operational Plan. This was deliberate and provided for a degree of flexibility in-year and based on previous years this was an appropriate start point for the year.
 - d) A pay award which had been approved by the Staffing and Recruitment Committee and the Finance Committee, with an overall cost of £65,000 representing an increase of 2.5% for pay and progression.
 - e) Through control of costs, only a £60,000 drop in Operational Plan investment.
 - f) In addition a £1.5million capital funding through the shovel ready projects.
18. The Finance Committee had considered the detail that morning. The Chair (Eleanor Mackintosh) reported a thorough discussion which had looked at staff time and investment. The Committee were content that this was a prudent budget and noted that this level of over programming had worked well in the last ten years. It was also noted that the shovel ready projects had put huge pressures on staff and understanding was required over the next few months. The Committee had agreed that it might be necessary to bring in extra help (at some revenue cost) to support. The Finance Committee and the Operational Management Group would continue to oversee delivery. Board Members could help by going into bat especially in terms of helping with negotiations with stakeholder groups.
19. The Board congratulated the team on the acquisition of capital and on the approach that was being taken. It was noted that the shovel ready approach to capital funding could be around for the next few years and the Park Authority needed to be well placed to take advantage of this. This was noted and David Cameron reported that specifications for the next tranche of projects were already being drawn up.
20. The Finance Committee had noted with great sadness the loss of Alistair Hight who had always provided an excellent service to the Finance Committee; he had always been professional, courteous, and engaging.

21. **The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:**
- a) **Approved the budget for the 2013/14 financial year;**
 - b) **Noted the approved budget would be monitored by the Finance Committee on behalf of the year;**
 - c) **Noted with grateful thanks the contribution of Alistair Hight and the whole Finance Team.**

Anti Bribery Policy (Paper 4)

22. This paper was tabled for information. Members confirmed they were content with the Policy contained in the paper.

AOCB

23. A quick round up of activity by Member:
- a) Katrina Farquhar had made a presentation at Alford Academy together with Alan Smith; attended a community engagement event at Strathdon with Claire Ross.
 - b) Willie McKenna: noted that with the continued illness of Mary McCafferty (directly elected member for the Grantown area) any Board member should try and help cover her patch.
 - c) Duncan Bryden: had attended the launch of the Year of Natural Scotland in January at the Scottish Parliament; would be attending the LINK parliamentary reception coming up shortly.
24. The Convener drew attention of Members to the forward look of events which had been circulated on 18th January.
25. Members were reminded of the request from the Scottish Government to complete a diversity monitoring questionnaire (to be returned to the Scottish Government)
26. The Chief Executive flagged up recent concerns in other National Park Authorities over use of Tweeting during meetings by members of the public (but also possibly Members of the Board). There was no proposal to try and control that – it was not possible and anyway was not consistent with the CNPA's policy on transparency and openness. However, Board Members were reminded that what they say, but also how they say it, was particularly important in these circumstances.
27. The new Chief Executive, Grant Moir, started on the 4th of March and would be looking to meet Board Members.

Date of Next Meeting:

28. Next formal meeting: 12th April 2013, Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey.