

INCLUSIVE CAIRNGORMS

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2012 at 11.00am
At Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore

Present:

Elspeth Grant	CNPA
Claire Ross	CNPA
Gordon Riddler	CNPA Board
Kevin Hutchens	Independent Social Worker
Jim Brown (Chairman)	Blackrock Productions
Anne MacLean	RNIB
Eric Baird	Cairngorms Ranger Services
Alasdair Johnston	Aberdeen City Council
Morag Redwood	Highlands & Islands Equality Forum
Maggie Lawson	B&S Community Transport Company
Suresh Paul	Equal Adventure
Karen Archer	CNPA
Aileen Graham	B&S Access Panel
Morag Campbell	B&S Access Panel
Adam Sime	Planning Gain, Aberdeenshire Council
Karen Derrick	VABS
Susan Hunter	Highland Small Communities Housing Trust
Di Alexander	CNPA
Ivor Souter	Highland Council
Liz Scott	Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Apologies:

Hazel McLaren	Aberdeenshire Community Planning
David Atkinson	Scottish Rural Churches Group
Karine Suller	Planning Gain, Aberdeenshire Council
Hector MacDonald	SDEF
Kate Christie	CNPA
Bob Bennett	Perth and Kinross Access Panel
Carolyn Cornfield	Caberfeidh Horizons
Alan Melrose	COAT
Jane Cox	COAT
Don Ferguson	Highland Disabled Ramblers
Shiela Fletcher	Community Transport Association
Simon Jeffrey	Highland Council
Clifford Graham	Barnardo's Works
Ken MacMillan	STUC
Jackie Cropper	Grand Central Savings

Welcome and Introduction

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

Minutes of Last Meeting

2. The minutes of the last meeting held on 24 November were approved subject to amendments that Jackie Cropper and Anne MacLean had given apologies, and that Eric Baird represents ranger services in the Cairngorms. Proposed by Gregor Hutchens, seconded by Kevin Hutchens.

Matters arising from the Minutes

3. Ref para 3, it was noted that there are elections in May this year, so could a letter be sent to all 5 local authorities requesting assistance at Service Points for electors who are visually impaired. **Action EG**
4. Ref para 18, CR reported that she had met with Stuart Davidson, Highland Youth convener and Cllr Jaci Douglas in January to find out more about his role. It is a year long bursary (now in its 5th year) which is linked into Highland Youth Parliament and local Youth forums. It was suggested we ask Stuart to come along to a future IC meeting. **Action EG**
5. Ref para 20, AM reported that the CNPA planning committee had agreed for the bus stop to be moved at the Aviemore hall. Current developments with the project include looking at replacing the heavy doors at the railway station with automatic doors.

National Park Plan and Local Development Plan follow up

6. Following the discussion at the last meeting, notes had been circulated on the session, along with a paper setting out how CNPA has addressed the key points raised, and suggesting how IC can get involved in other functions of CNPA.
7. CR apologised for the poor communication in following up the last meeting and assured the group that their comments have been taken on board in the Park Plan, but also that we will have a workshop session as previously agreed, focussing on CNPA's Operational Plan. **Action EG**
8. EG ran through the paper on how equality and Park for All is highlighted in the Park Plan, noting its importance in the delivery of the Plan and how this can be promoted through EqlAs and involving Inclusive Cairngorms.

9. AM noted that it was useful to remember that, apart from planning and outdoor access functions, the CNPA's role is principally an influencing role, in enabling other partners to deliver the Park Plan. Eg by promoting best practice, providing some funding.

Presentation – Di Alexander

10. Di Alexander gave a presentation on affordable housing in the National Park. He referred to social rented housing to low cost home ownership, and the background of who delivers affordable housing from local authorities to housing associations.
11. Di noted that 321 affordable houses have been built in the Park, mostly in Badenoch and Strathspey. The prospects for affordable housing the Park are currently affected by the current economic conditions, with reduced public funding from Scottish Government and the difficulty of borrowing money. But there are opportunities available eg Innovation Investment Fund and Community Land fund.

CNPA Public Duties (standing item)

Equality Duty

12. EG reported that the Scottish Government had recently published the specific duties under the Equality Act 2010, which will come into force in May 2012. These will require CNPA to:
- Undertake Equality Impact assessments
 - Publish employment monitoring information
 - Publish equality outcomes every 4 years
 - Produce a mainstreaming report every 2 years
 - Introduce equality considerations in procurement documents
 - Publish annually gender pay gap statistics.
13. It was noted that, with the public spending cuts and reduced staffing, the EHRC will be taking on more of an enforcement role in future.

Outdoor Access

14. EG had previously circulated CNPA's outdoor access report. The group asked about the requirement for CNP rangers to have equality and diversity training. Although it isn't a requirement as such, they are encouraged to work with disadvantaged groups. It was noted that LL&TNP have provided such training to their rangers (who are employed by Park Authority). In conclusion, it was felt that E&D training should be made a requirement for CNP rangers, and EG would feed this back to the Outdoor Access team. **Action EG**

Planning

15. EG had circulated a paper on a suggested protocol for consulting Inclusive Cairngorms in the planning application process. This is based on a previous consultation exercise with IC on An Camas Mor with specific feedback provided on disability, young people and low income. It was suggested that the same members sit on sub-group ie Kevin Hutchens, Hector MacDonald, Ivor Souter along with the chair, Eric Baird and Anne Maclean, and the relevant Access Panel. Membership of the group to be confirmed through EqIA.

16. It was agreed that it would be useful to have a presentation on planning by the CNPA at a future IC meeting. **Action EG**

Young People (standing item)

17. There were no further items to discuss on young people.

Disability

18. Maggie Lawson reported on the Access to Aviemore project, which was setup in response to a household survey which identified a need for a car scheme for people on low incomes, with health problems, older people and those living in outlying areas where public transport is not available. The pilot project has been well used with direct benefits to users. Maggie also mentioned the disability scooters which are available for local people and visitors to the area.

19. Suresh Paul reported on the work of his organisation Equal Adventure, which develops resources and equipment for 'inclusive adventure', and is based in Dulnain Bridge. The business has grown in last 2 years, now employs 5 people, but unfortunately only 0.5% of his activity takes place in the Park.

20. Morag Campbell noted that they now have the Access Panel leaflet on their website.

Low Income

21. There were no items to discuss on low income.

AOCB

22. Eric Baird referred to the public spending cuts / restructuring within Aberdeen City, and its impact on:

- client groups (schools and other disadvantaged groups) being able to visit the Park and access ranger services. Cuts are affecting transport, as well as staffing of these groups.

- Ranger service provision – these groups are a key audience for some ranger services.
 - Developing a Park for All
23. Alasdair Johnston supported this by adding that this aspect of his previous job has come to an end. Anne MacLean added that Edinburgh City is no longer supporting visits to the Park for visually impaired groups.
24. It was suggested that IC writes to MSPs, COSLA, and secretaries and chairs of political parties re this issue. However it was noted that as CNPA is an NDPB, therefore it should not get involved in political areas, rather members could lobby candidates individually (in the forthcoming election).
25. However EG did note that there are 2 travel grant schemes currently operating in the Park:
- a) School field trip fund for schools in Aberdeenshire (funded through Aberdeenshire Council - and previously CNPA)
 - b) Community travel grant, which has recently been extended to community groups (not schools) to visit the Cairngorms National Park. Operated by Buchan Countryside Group, on behalf of SNH. More details at <http://www.outdoors4all.org.uk/ctg.html>
26. It was suggested we discuss this further with agencies involved, including equality officers. CR added that CNPA would take this into consideration in reviewing our Outreach Project Plan. **Action EG/CR**

AOCB

27. Karen Derrick noted that she is leading on a new three year project ‘Strengthening Communities Project’ - building capacity with local communities in Badenoch & Strathspey. The project is based in the Town House in Grantown on Spey.
28. CR reported on behalf of Ken MacMillan, that there will be a conference on housing co-operatives in the autumn.
29. Alasdair Johnston noted the NHS is planning to reorganise maternity provision and is proposing closing the Aboyne unit.
30. EG circulated the latest proofs of the *Getting Into National Parks and NNRs* inserts for final comments. These will be promoted alongside SNH’s travel grant (above).

Date of next meeting

31. The date of the next meeting is on 19 June at 11am, venue to be confirmed.
Now confirmed as Boat of Garten Community Hall.