

**MINUTE of MEETING of the  
BOARD OF THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
held within the Duke of Gordon Hotel, Kingussie  
on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2003 at 10.30am**

**PRESENT:**

|                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Mr Peter Argyle       | Mrs Anne MacLean      |
| Mr Eric Baird         | Mr Alastair MacLennan |
| Mr Stuart Black       | Mr William McKenna    |
| Mr Duncan Bryden      | Mr Andrew Rafferty    |
| Ms Sally Dowden       | Mr David Selfridge    |
| Mr Basil Dunlop       | Mr Robert Severn      |
| Mr Douglas Glass      | Ms Joyce Simpson      |
| Mr Angus Gordon       | Mrs Sheena Slimon     |
| Mrs Lucy Grant        | Mr Richard Stroud     |
| Mr David Green        | Mr Andrew Thin        |
| Mr Bruce Luffman      | Mr Bob Wilson         |
| Ms Eleanor Mackintosh |                       |

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr A. McCourt, Chief Executive, Highland Council  
Ms J Hope, Interim Chief Executive, Cairngorms National Park Authority  
Mr A F Simpson, Area Manager Badenoch and Strathspey, Highland Council  
Mr N Halfhide, Director of Policy and Projects, Cairngorms National Park Authority  
Mr K Fairweather, Highland Council

**APOLOGIES:**

1. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr Gregor Rimell, and Ms Susan Walker.

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

2. Pending the election of the Convener, the Returning Officer, Mr A. McCourt, Chief Executive of The Highland Council took the Chair at the commencement of the meeting.
3. Mr A. McCourt welcomed members to the first meeting of the newly constituted Authority. He remarked that, as members, they would have the challenging task of working together to forge the new National Park Authority and he expressed his confidence that the Authority, both by its own efforts and through working in partnership with the various communities within the Park's boundaries, would be able to enhance the quality of life for all those who lived in, worked in, or visited the Park.

## **BUSINESS**

### **ELECTION OF CONVENER AND DEPUTY CONVENER**

4. There was circulated a report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003 by Chief Executive of Highland Council setting out a proposed procedure for the election of Convener and Deputy Convener of the Cairngorms National Park Authority.
5. The report outlined the recommended voting procedure and the options as to how any vote should be conducted; invited the meeting to determine whether candidates for election should be permitted to make a short statement in support of their nomination; and whether the meeting should accept nominations, proposed and seconded, for candidates who had consented to be nominated but who were unable to attend the meeting and, if so, to have a statement made or circulated on their behalf. The report also recommended that the period of appointment of the Convener and Deputy Convener should be 18 months in the first instance.
6. Following discussion the meeting AGREED, on the MOTION of Mr B. Wilson, SECONDED by Mrs S. Slimon, that voting should be secret ballot. The meeting AGREED that nominated candidates should be permitted to make statements in support of their candidacy and FURTHER AGREED, on the MOTION of Mr Luffman, SECONDED by Mr Argyle that the meeting should accept nominations from candidates who had consented to be nominated but were unable to be present. The meeting ALSO AGREED that the initial periods of office for the Convener and Deputy Convener should be for 18 months.
7. Thereafter, the Chief Executive of Highland Council invited nominations for the post of Convener. Mr Argyle, SECONDED by Mr Luffman, MOVED the nomination of Mr A. Thin. There being no other nomination, Mr Thin was declared duly appointed and thereafter assumed the Chair.
8. Mr Thin thanked the members of the Authority for the confidence which they had shown in him by appointing him as their Convener. He stressed that he saw the Authority's main strength as being in the strong and diverse quality of its members and he looked forward to working with them in developing and building on these strengths for the benefit of the Authority and the Cairngorms National Park area.
9. Thereafter the Convener invited nominations for the post of Deputy Convener. Mr R. Severn, SECONDED by Mrs S. Slimon MOVED the nomination of Mrs A. MacLean. Mr McKenna, SECONDED by Mr Luffman, MOVED the nomination of Mr E. Baird.
10. Thereafter both Mrs A. MacLean and Mr E. Baird made short statements in support of their nominations.
11. On a vote being taken by secret ballot:-
  - 15 votes were cast for Mr E. Baird, and 7 votes were cast for Mrs A. MacLean, with one abstention.
  - Accordingly, Mr E. Baird was appointed as Deputy Convener.

## **STANDING ORDERS**

12. There was circulated a report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003 by the Chief Executive of Highland Council inviting members to note that until such time as the Authority determined its own procedures, arrangements for, and proceedings at meetings of the Authority were governed by the provisions of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The report invited the Board to consider whether to adopt its own Standing Orders and, if so minded, recommended that it be remitted to the Interim Chief Executive to prepare draft Standing Orders for consideration at the next meeting of the Authority with a view to their ultimate adoption at the following-again meeting of the Authority.
13. The meeting AGREED that the Authority should adopt its own Standing Orders to regulate its proceedings and in that regard it was agreed that these should provide that, in the absence of the Convener, the Deputy Convener should preside at meetings and in his/her absence another member of the Authority chosen by the members present should preside.
14. The meeting FURTHER AGREED that it be remitted to the Interim Chief Executive to prepare draft Standing Orders for consideration at the next meeting of the Authority.

## **ACTING PROPER OFFICER AND ACTING MONITORING OFFICER**

15. There was circulated a report by the Chief Executive of Highland Council dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003 inviting members to agree that the Interim Chief Executive be appointed (a) as the Authority's Interim Proper Officer for the purposes of Part IIIA of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and (b) as its Interim Monitoring Officer as required by Section 5[1] of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 until the Authority had determined the designation of these positions within its approved management structure and had made the appropriate appointments to these positions.
16. The meeting AGREED that the Interim Chief Executive should be appointed as the Authority's Interim Proper Officer and as its Interim Monitoring Officer.

## **DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS TO STAFF**

17. There was circulated a report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003 by the Interim Chief Executive inviting members to approve the interim arrangements set out in the report for the delegation of the Authority's functions to its staff.
18. The Interim Chief Executive spoke briefly to the report and reminded the meeting that the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 provided that anything which was authorised or required to be done by the Authority may be done by any employee who was authorised for the purpose by the Authority.
19. In putting forward the recommended Scheme of Delegation the Interim Chief Executive emphasised that the powers which it was recommended should be delegated to staff would not generally be exercised when any decision by an

authorised official would represent a departure from or significant development of the Authority's policies or procedures and she commented that this should afford the Authority the necessary confidence that such delegation would be exercised properly.

20. Thereafter, the meeting AGREED to approved the Scheme of Delegation detailed in the report and authorised the Interim Chief Executive to proceed accordingly.

#### **TIME INPUT AND REMUNERATION OF MEMBERS**

21. There was circulated a report by the Interim Chief Executive dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003 inviting members to agree to their input of time as Board Members for the rest of the calendar year as a basis for remuneration and to agree arrangements for travel and subsistence similar to those adopted by the Cairngorms Partnership and thereafter to review these matters towards the end of 2003 in the light of experience.
22. Members discussed the anticipated work loads for themselves and for the Convener and Deputy Convener in the initial stages of establishing the Authority and the anticipated commitment involved as well as recognising the impact of the considerable amount of travelling which was likely to be involved given the Park's size and geography. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that the question of hiring a minibus to transport members to meetings was under consideration.
23. Thereafter, the meeting AGREED that for the remainder of the current calendar year and subject to approval by the Scottish Ministers, the Convener be paid on the basis of two days work per week on behalf of the Authority and the Deputy Convener one day. The meeting FURTHER AGREED that other members be paid on the basis of working three days per month for the Authority; that the rates of travel and subsistence operated by the Cairngorms Partnership be adopted subject to a separate rate being agreed at the next meeting for the provision of breakfast and that these arrangements should apply to the end of 2003 when they would be reviewed in the light of experience.

#### **PROVISIONAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR SHADOW PERIOD**

24. There was circulated a Report by the Interim Chief Executive dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003 offering suggestions for briefings, training sessions and discussion sessions over the five months of the "shadow period". Members were invited to discuss these suggestions and offer comments so that the programme of meetings and visits could be firmed up and arrangements made as required.
25. Members commented that it would be helpful, prior to their meetings with Community and other groups throughout the Park's area, to agree their initial approach and priorities to avoid giving 'mixed messages' and for training to be offered to members on giving presentations and in the use of 'Power Point' in doing so. Some Members also expressed the view that the Authority should give early consideration to the adoption of a logo, for the erection of appropriate signage at the major routes into the National Park and to exploring the whole question of the rationalisation of signage within and at the boundaries of the Park with the appropriate local and other authorities.

26. Members also expressed the view that in undertaking further consultations the Authority should avoid going over well-worn material, and should also make efforts to contact those groups who may not have been involved in the previous consultations relating to the National Park.
27. In response, the Interim Chief Executive commented that these were all issues which could be taken into account in the informal briefing session which was scheduled to follow this meeting to discuss a communications strategy and a range of other issues.
28. Thereafter, the meeting AGREED that the Board should use the time provided by the shadow period to consider and discuss the range of fundamental issues which will set the tone and culture of the organisation and embark on the recommended programme of meetings, visits, discussions and training sessions outlined in the report on the basis that these could be adapted in the light of experience and as matters evolved.

## PROJECT COMMITMENTS

29. **The Convener declared an interest in the following item of business. Accordingly he relinquished the Chair in favour of the Deputy Convener and took no part in the ensuing discussing and determination of the matter.**
30. There was circulated a report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003 by the Director of Policy and Projects advising the Board of the projects which it had inherited from the Cairngorms Partnership and the timetable for transferring these projects to the Authority. The report also advised the Board of other project commitments which were in prospect and recommended that the Board contribute to two new projects which it was considered would complement the Authority's aims and objectives in contributing to the overall development of the National Park's area.
31. The Director of Policy and Projects spoke to the report and advised the meeting that the Authority had inherited 17 individual project commitments which were detailed in the Annex to the report. The Authority would, variously, either lead or have a financial input to these various projects, all of which were seen as being consistent with the aims and objectives of the Authority. He commented that although a number of these projects extended outwith the Park's boundaries, he considered this beneficial in helping with the relationship between the areas within the Park's boundaries and those outwith. The total value of these inherited project commitments was approximately £4.7M and that the inherited revenue commitment for the Authority to them in the current and ensuing financial years to 2005/2006 amounted to some £170,000.
32. The Director advised that, in addition to these projects, the Authority would also inherit the Cairngorms LEADER + Programme which was worth approximately £2.41M in total, including £1M of European Structural Funds. Although the Authority would be the lead agency for this programme, individual items of expenditure would be determined by Local Action Groups with the Authority's role being to monitor and vouch for the approved expenditure.

33. As the Authority would not become fully operational until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2003 it could not legally award grants until then and, accordingly, a number of the projects involving grant expenditure would not transfer until that date.
34. The Director also advised that as part of its continuing work to maintain momentum prior to the Authority becoming operational, the Cairngorms Partnership had developed a number of new initiatives with a range of partner bodies and he recommended that the Board approve funding contribution to two of these projects, the Joint National Parks Visitor Survey and the John Muir Award. It was proposed that the Visitor Survey should commence immediately in tandem with a similar survey being undertaken in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park area to enable these surveys to inform each other. The cost of the survey to the Authority would be £50,000 of which £32,000 had already been secured and he invited the Board to agree to commit the balance of £18,000 required.
35. He further advised that the purpose of the John Muir Award was to seek to engage people in nature, develop their understanding of wild places and help them become involved in practical action for these places or issues relating to them and was delivered mainly through partnerships with a range of youth groups and other organisations. It was explained that 90% of the funding was already in place and that £9,978 was required from the Authority over three years for the project to proceed.
36. During discussion, Mr R. Severn queried whether it would be prudent for the Authority to commit to the proposed expenditure until such time as it had a definite budget from the Scottish Executive. In response, the Interim Chief Executive commented that she was confident that the necessary funding would be forthcoming but, if not, the Authority should be able to find the funding itself by reviewing other commitments.
37. Thereafter, the meeting AGREED on the MOTION of Mr D. Selfridge, SECONDED by Mr B. Luffman, to accept the recommendation and to commit the necessary expenditure to the Joint National Parks' Visitor Survey and to the John Muir Award.

**(Convener A. Thin resumed the Chair)**

**38. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

39. It was AGREED that the next meeting of the Board be held on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2003 and that the proposed programme of informal meetings be adjusted accordingly.

**40. The meeting concluded at 11.45am.**