
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held in the Community Hall, Nethybridge on Friday 15 June 2018 at 10.45am

PRESENT

Peter Argyle (Convener)	John Latham
Rebecca Badger	Eleanor Mackintosh
Geva Blackett	Xander McDade
Carolyn Caddick	Ian McLaren
Angela Douglas	Willie McKenna
Dave Fallows	Gordon Riddler
Pippa Hadley	Judith Webb
Janet Hunter	Brian Wood (Deputy Convener)

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive
Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning and Rural Development
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services
Pete Mayhew, Director of Conservation and Visitor Experience
Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services
Andy Ford, Head of Conservation
Andy Wells, Chair of Cairngorms Nature
Alan Smith, Outdoor Learning Officer
Heather Trench, Sustainable Tourism Officer
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

Apologies:

Gregor Hutcheon Walter Wilson

Welcome and Introduction

1. Peter Argyle, the Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Nethy Bridge.

2. The Deputy Convener said that positive and useful discussions with Lucy Ford (Forest Enterprise) and volunteer Rangers: Michelle Green, Heather Palomino, Alistair Borthwick and Peter Long had taken place the evening before. It was suggested that these discussions should be repeated regularly.
3. Apologies were noted.
4. **Action:**
 - i. **Informal Discussion session with Volunteer Rangers to be repeated in the future.**

Minutes of Last Meetings held on 16 March 2018 – for approval

5. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 March 2018 were agreed with no amendments:

Matters Arising

6. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the minutes of the meeting on 16 March 2018:
 - a) Action Point at Para 6 (i.) – Closed – Tickets for Geva Blackett and Rebecca Badger have been booked to attend the CBP Summer Conference on 26 June 2018.
 - b) Action Point at Para 6 (ii.) – Closed – Dave Fallows attended and represented the Board at the Parliamentary Reception on 17th April 2018.
 - c) Action Point at Para 9 (bullet point 7) - In hand – The Board Informal session and visit to the East Cairngorm Moorland Partnership has been scheduled to take place in November 2018.
 - d) Action Point at Para 9 (bullet point 8) – In hand – Board Business discussion on New Mountain Hare Guidance will be scheduled when guidance has been published.
 - e) Action Point at Para 7 (bullet point 4) – On hold – Deer movement concerns from SNH not yet received.
 - f) Action Point at Para 18 (i.) – Closed – Two Board members have submitted their apologies for Europarc. All Board choices now received and places will be booked.
 - g) Action Point at Para 18 (ii.) – In Hand – LDP MIR Consultation Responses will be uploaded for viewing on the corporate website on 22nd June 2018 and viewable by the public from 23rd June 2018.
 - h) Action Points at Para 18 (iii.) – In Hand – Murray Ferguson to pursue accessing information on HIE's business panel, response awaited.
 - i) Action Point at Para 18 (iv.) – Closed – Pete Crane to feedback on the

progress made with the Mountains and the People Project on today's Agenda as Paper 6.

- j) Action Point at Para 27 (i.) – Closed – Murray Ferguson has followed up opportunities with Chris Foy of VisitAberdeenshire.
- k) Action Point at Para 27 (ii.) – Closed – Grant Moir has considered how to integrate the role of Rangers into the Communications and Engagement Strategy 2018-2022.
- l) Action Point at Para 27 (iii.) – In Hand – VisitScotland's reports on the marketing campaigns will be circulated to the Board as they are produced.
- m) Action Point at Para 27 (iii.) – Closed – Grant Moir considered how to structure the audiences better in line with the National Park aims.
- n) Action Point at Para 38 (i.) – In Hand – Hill Tracks as an item of discussion will be added to the agenda of an early meeting of Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group (CUAG).
- o) Action Point at Para 38 (ii.) – In Hand – Following further discussion on CUAG membership, it was felt that tourism representation would be covered sufficiently by several of the proposed membership organisations.
- p) Action Point at Para 10 (bullet point 1) – Dave Fallows attended the Tourism Alliance Conference on 24th April 2018 with Geva Blackett and not Walter Wilson.

Declarations of Interest

7. No interests declared.

CEO Report (Paper 1)

8. Grant Moir, Chief Executive, introduced Paper 1 which highlights the main strategic work streams that are being directed by Management Team. Grant explained that these are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver National Park Partnership Plan priorities, therefore a small subset of the wide range of activities being undertaken currently by the Authority. He highlighted the following areas:
- a) The Corporate plan would be published soon.
 - b) Staff numbers were currently at their highest point since establishment of the Authority with 14 to 15 additional posts being funded by external sources.
 - c) The Rural Tourism Fund bid had passed through its first stage, second stage by end July 2018.
 - d) A funding bid has been submitted to the European Rural Development Fund (ERDF) for the Speyside Way.
 - e) The Europarc Conference in September was all in hand and registration numbers beginning to look very promising.

9. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) A9 dualling: More details were sought on Killiecrankie section. Grant explained that at present we had an objection to this section and were in discussions with TS and HES as HES also had an objection.
 - b) Europarc Youth Manifesto: members welcomed the focus of the conference on young people and engaging them in National Parks. Members noted UK National Parks perhaps had many of the same issues but remained different in scope and objectives from many European counterparts.
 - c) Cairngorms Nature Weekend: in discussion members highlighted they had been impressed by Braemar hub, while there were some issues noted in communications and inaccuracies in the programme. Members asked about preparing for next year? Grant Moir and Andy Ford reported that the first of a number of wash-up meetings would be held later today and that this would help to guide the development of next year's programme. Some members believed that Board members could have been more engaged in the development and promotion of the programme and this was noted by AF to bring into reviews of the event and its management. In terms of promoting the date early, AF confirmed the Cairngorms Nature Weekend is always the second weekend in May.
 - d) A member commented that the Rural Skills Day was really good but it unfortunately clashed with senior secondary schools events.
 - e) A member asked for clarity on long distance routes – what is going to be done with challenges to them and incorporation of cycle routes. Pete Crane responded that Carrbridge community see benefit of multipurpose link between there and Aviemore and officers are still waiting for proposals from Transport Scotland. However, there are early indications that these proposals may not meet all expectations and there may be protracted discussions and negotiations, as CNPA has been clear on need for a multipurpose off road link.
 - f) Tourism action plan and visitor survey: members sought clarification on how structured this survey was. Is it an opportunity to ask visitors what they value about Scottish landscapes? Grant clarified that the survey takes place every 5 years, with consistent questions asked each time to give trend data. This is the 4th survey. There are some opportunities for questions to change. This time we are trying to tie in with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs NPA (LLTNPA) in order to develop some consistency in information in this aspect of operations between the two Scottish National Parks.
 - g) Members sought further information on the Kingussie “Am Fasgadh” project – Grant explained that a community group is taking over property owned by Highland Council. Their main challenge is securing funding and transfer of the ownership.

- h) Members welcomed the initiative on youth employment being taken forward.
- i) Members asked whether stakeholder engagement work was throwing up any common themes or repeated messages for the Authority to learn from.
Grant responded that there is not a lot of consistency, with responses dependent on what each stakeholder is interested in. There does appear a general recognition that CNPA is doing what it can in lots of different areas.
- j) Members asked for more information on the rural transport project under development by the LEADER Local Action Group (LAG). David Cameron responded that this was still going through formative sessions. We had hosted a visit from 9 representatives from Kilkenny in March with an interest in rural transport and who are interested in developing a cooperation project to share knowledge and trial initiatives across both Kilkenny and Cairngorms to make public and active transport more accessible to residents and visitors. Cairngorms LAG is hopeful a good cooperation project can be established with Kilkenny.
- k) The Convenor thanked Grant and team on behalf of the Board for all work underpinning this report.

10. The Board noted the Paper.

11. Actions:

i. None

Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2018 – 2023 (Paper 2)

- 12. Andy Ford, Head of Conservation introduced Andy Wells who is the Chair of Cairngorms Nature. Andy Wells thanked CNPA staff for their significant input to the Cairngorms Nature Action Planning process.
- 13. Andy Ford, Head of Conservation introduced Paper 2 which requests approval to undertake a formal consultation on the draft Cairngorms Nature Action Plan. Andy also addressed the matters Board raised last time in review of the draft consultation document and explained how these have been addressed in the consultation document now presented.
- 14. The Board discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:
 - a) The Convenor thanked Andy Wells on the work and result is that Cairngorms Nature is widely recognised as a positive brand in the Park with priority conservation work being done. Other members supported the Convenor in these thanks.
 - b) Members asked whether there was any evidence of partner buy-in? Andy Wells responded this had been patchy, with the land management sector the

most patchy. However, there has been significant improvement over past 5 years while recognising there is more work to do. Members suggested there may be merit in their becoming involved with partners to encourage buy-in, while Grant indicated he was content there was a good mix of representatives involved in taking this work forward.

- c) Members requested a link to the infographics being used which were very well drawn together. Grant responded the consultation was being launched on Wednesday and staff will send link to everyone.
- d) Members questioned the logic of the link presented between “Aims, Priorities and Actions” at page 14 of the document. After discussions, Grant concluded that there is an opportunity to see what comes out of the consultation and discuss as a board before the plan is finalised.
- e) There was a suggestion that the wording of the 2063 vision should be more positive. Andy Ford responded that this wording is taken from original visions, and the drafting group had concluded that they didn’t want to tinker with vision 5 years after adoption, therefore it had been retained consistently.
- f) Members noted there is no mention of Butterfly Conservation Scotland. Andy Ford responded that lead partners had been identified as already active in Cairngorms. Andy Wells commented there will be opportunity with new plan to monitor how partnerships are working and adapt as required.
- g) Members made a number of comments on presentation, layout and formatting which Andy Ford agreed would be reviewed and amended where possible prior to launch of consultation. Members also made a number of positive comments on the clarity of the document, the effective lay out and good use of photographs. There was also a suggestion to include a link to the current plan.

15. The Board agreed to a 12 week consultation on the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan starting in June 2018.

16. Actions:

- i. Send consultation and infographic links to members.**
- ii. Review formatting in light of comments made and amend where possible prior to launch of consultation.**

National Park Partnership Plan 2017 – 2022 Delivery Update (Paper 3)

- 17. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 3 which presents an update on delivery against the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022.**

18. The Board considered the detail of the paper and discussed the following points:
- a) Members welcomed the paper. Members commented that the information set out well the wide range of activities being undertaken and presented an appropriate level of detail on these activities to allow an informed review of activities.
 - b) A question was asked on whether we are using the coloured risk rating in relation to column 5 actions or in relation to NPPP outcomes as a whole. Linked to this, on page 8, 4c should Tomintoul and Glenlivet be in there in which case there is a question that this should be rated as amber rather than green? Grant agreed this project could fit in this area of the monitoring and also elsewhere, and that the presentation perhaps should split further into green and amber elements. A member felt that showing all Tomintoul and Glenlivet programme made up of multiple projects as green is too optimistic.
 - c) A suggestion was made that Wildlife Crime should be red. Grant agreed that next time this project aspect would be split out to allow clearer split of risk assessment and agreed wildlife crime could be red. David explained his assessment guidance that red highlights that a significant intervention is needed to ensure delivery takes place.
 - d) A number of comments on formatting were made, including writing relevant colour in text for anyone who is colour-blind and also noting one area had not been risk assessed in the presentation.
19. **The Board:**
- a) **Reviewed the update on delivery against the NPPP as set out in the paper**
 - b) **Highlighted any achievements or exceptions which, from a strategic leadership perspective, Board members believe are of particular significance to the delivery of the Authority's strategic objectives.**
20. **Actions:**
- i. **Review presentational format prior to next presentation.**

Strategic Risk Register Review (Paper 4)

21. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 4 which presents a review of the Authority's strategic risk register in the context of the Authority's new Corporate Plan for 2018/2022, as agreed by the Board in March 2018 and subsequently approved by Scottish Ministers. An updated commentary on management's review of action taken to mitigate risk and current risk status is also provided.

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

- a) A member was interested in what our current appetite for risk is, appreciate NDPB can be constrained in terms of risk. David commented that risk appetite was an emerging area of analysis on risk to help manage required levels of response and also support innovation and taking opportunities.
- b) A member questioned whether a number of the risks identified were actually project risks rather than strategic risks. David responded that while some risk areas originated in specific project delivery, they were included as they had cross-organisational significance in terms of potential impact, perhaps on reputation or resources.
- c) A member noted that they would be happy to contribute to a buddy system for new members to explain processes. The Convenor commented that there will be a lot of focus how we support new members at the start of their appointment, and plans for induction are in hand.
- d) A member asked whether it is possible to do any more to reduce the IT security risk. David responded that we have an internal audit action plan and Scottish Government guidance was recently published. An independent review is also being done on cyber security. David is waiting until something is signed off before changing rating, while the Convenor noted that IT will probably never be green, as risk of cybercrime will always be there.
- e) Members discussed the risk around the end of current LEADER funding on page 12 of the risk register, and the inherent risk to community led local development. Members asked whether there was confidence in a new funding mechanism coming our way? Grant responded that there is no clear answer to that, as we don't know what will happen after current SRDP period. Grant is confident there will be some community funding scheme but not sure what format this will take. David commented that it was the lack of confidence that led to this risk's inclusion in the register.
- f) Members considered whether there is a risk around Board direction through changing membership if there are only 5 changes. David responded this risk also recognised directly elected members in March 2019 potentially creating more change in membership in a compressed amount of time
- g) Members noted a couple of presentational improvements for David to consider, while also noting two risks in visitor services and rural development had not had their risk trend updated.

23. **The Board:**

- a) **Considered the review presented of the Authority's risk register**
- b) **Considered whether members have any further updates which should be incorporated into the SRR, including any additional risks not currently incorporated.**

- c) Adopted the Strategic Risk Register as the basis of organisational risk management supporting delivery of the Corporate Plan 2018/2022.**

24. Actions:

- i. Few presentational comments on risk register for consideration.**

Volunteer Cairngorms (Paper 5)

25. Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services introduced Paper 5 which asks the Board to review the CNPA's support for more environmental volunteering opportunities and developing Volunteer Rangers.
26. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) The Convenor commented on a visit to LLTNP, and that he was impressed with what they did, with a potential to take it and adapt their model into a scheme that works here. He commented that the work here to date was very successful and with a huge enthusiasm for it from those volunteering – huge success, and potential to build on that.
 - b) A member noted a need to balance our intention to increase volunteering with recognising the significant voluntary effort within our communities which already went into activities such as support for development trusts and similar activities. Alan Smith responded that this was a valid concern and that our intention is not to impose anything, rather it is to offer communities support, looking at where communities are to see what they want and help to offer it, and add value.
 - c) With reference to Tomintoul and Glenlivet where so much work done by volunteers, a member questioned whether that can be recognised and captured to keep capitalising on those volunteers. Pete agreed this could be done. Alan Smith has started discussion with volunteers in this and Capercaillie projects.
 - d) A reference was made to the volunteer rangers met by the Board last night, and a question made on how long would they do it? How does someone manage to organise all that? Pete responded that it is normal to lose 20% of volunteers a year, so there is a need to recruit as we go along.
 - e) Members asked when people applying to be volunteer rangers do not get accepted, whether there is some mechanism in place to deal with that. Alan confirmed he is looking for people to have skills to do the specifics of volunteer rangers. Where they were not successful, he would encourage people to get involved with other groups in place if appropriate.

- f) A member suggested there should be an opportunity or event to recognise all the volunteers in the Park. Pete agreed this is worth looking into. Members did note the previous evening had highlighted volunteers were feeling valued.
- g) In discussion on costs, Pete noted project delivery had been more effective and efficient than expected. Alan confirmed a cost of £400-£500 each year to get a volunteer kitted out and trained. Some volunteers also donated their own travel costs. Members commented that some cost / benefit analysis could be very powerful.

27. The Board:

- a) **Noted the successful outputs of the Volunteer Cairngorms to date;**
- b) **Agreed that over the next 18 months we should continue to deliver the agreed pilot programme and ensure that the programme is sustainable thereafter.**

28. Actions: None

Mountains and People Project (Paper 6)

- 29. Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services introduced Paper 6 which asks that the Board review the five year, £6.4m, Mountains & People Project at the half way point and agree how to maintain the ongoing outputs of the project beyond 2020.
- 30. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Maintenance responsibility was discussed. Noted that the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) was responsible for maintenance for a 10 year period. David Cameron confirmed there were no project funds for maintenance – the project was a capital focused activity for improvement and reinstatement of paths. OATS was already considering how it might go about funding that 10 year maintenance responsibility.
 - b) After the 10 year project maintenance responsibility, it was less clear how maintenance would be undertaken. Some sustainable maintenance funding and delivery process is therefore crucial.
 - c) In discussing project coverage, Pete explained earlier projects had focussed on specific areas of the Cairngorms NP, while this current project was more comprehensive in looking at priority path improvements throughout the Cairngorms NP.

31. **The Board:**
- a) **Noted the successful outputs of the Mountains and People project to date.**
 - b) **Agreed that for the second half of the project we need to:**
 - i. **Support the remaining two & half years of Mountains & People Project**
 - ii. **Develop a sustainable way to maintain the paths**
 - iii. **Integrate project volunteering into Volunteer Cairngorms**
 - iv. **Integrate project education into wider work supported by CNPA and partners**

32. **Actions: None.**

Break for lunch

Visitor Giving (Paper 7)

33. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development introduced Paper 7 which presents proposals for establishment of a Visitor Giving Scheme for the Cairngorms National Park. Since time of writing, Trust Manager role had been appointed with Nancy Chambers starting in early August 2018. Murray noted he had received comments on the paper from Mark Tate yesterday on behalf Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP). The feedback was a little mixed: supportive but also some challenges made, in particular opposing the possibility of NP Brand users being required to promote the visitor giving scheme.
34. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) A member commented that hearts and minds to be won, with a need to achieve buy-in. He suggested a key development was to establish the Memorandum of Understanding and business plan, and gain evidence of CBP buy-in. He asked that this is brought back to Board prior to going to Finance and Delivery Committee as he felt it important to have that additional step in approval. The member endorsed the CBP view that we shouldn't have expectation that those using the brand will promote the scheme.
 - b) A member noted that there are many such schemes around the world, and noted that we don't currently say how much targeting each year in money. The member was concerned about the apparent lack of buy in from businesses and their visitor facing staff. Grant responded that a number of individual businesses are positive about the idea and that it was time to dip toe in water.

- c) Further member comments were supportive of proposals, and agreed with Grant on a need to be bold, take opportunity now. There was also a need to understand those businesses that were opposed in order to address issues where we could.
- d) Members commented that it was very feasible to operate an opt-in rather than opt-out scheme.
- e) Members noted the way we might feedback to donors on the scheme was potentially missing from the paper.
- f) Members thanked Murray and the team for a good paper.
- g) Members had further discussion on the CBP position and concern about using the Trust to administer and lead on the project. Some members commented that they would like to see CBP more on board. Equally, members commented that we can't be held hostage to moving thing onwards, with tight timelines. Would like to know CBP rationale for getting behind some similar activities and not this. It was perhaps possible to give CBP a limited opportunity to get on board.
- h) Members commented that we need to be clear that we have listened to concerns and reasons for moving ahead. The Convenor commented that we are not imposing a scheme on businesses. We need to know why CBP not on board with an optional scheme that businesses can buy into, if they don't that's fine. The Convenor stated we must be explicit what money will be used for, what is raised and benefits of it/ monitoring. It seems that CBP can't support it given their Board's position, while a number of individual businesses within CBP are supportive. Members asked whether CBP had expressed a view as to where funds needed to support investment that may come from a scheme would otherwise be raised?
- i) Murray responded that he and his team would determine how to work best with CBP, to work towards memo of understanding and invite CBP to be part of it. Murray stated it would be good if CBP did get involved.
- j) The Convenor noted there is an ideal to devise a scheme that is electronic, no work for businesses apart from telling visitors about it.

35. David Fallows put forward a motion that the Board agrees in principle to the creation of a voluntary visitor giving scheme, subject to subsequent agreement by the Board of a report on further development, including an agreed Memorandum of Understanding between the partner organisations, a draft business plan, and evidence of participation by members of both CBP and Federation of Small Businesses by the September Board meeting. Once further development work is approved by the Board, oversight of further development including pilot projects shall be remitted to the Finance and Delivery Committee.

36. This motion was not seconded.

37. **The Board:**
- a) **Agreed in principle to support establishment of a Visitor Giving Scheme for the National Park**
 - b) **Agreed the proposals identified in paragraph 14 that will guide establishment of the Scheme**
 - c) **Noted that the Scheme will be launched following a development phase and further consideration by the Finance & Delivery Committee.**

Declarations of Interest (Paper 8)

38. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 8 which presents a flowchart to help with considering whether members need to make a declaration of interest in any proceedings, and if so sets out appropriate statements to make.
39. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the content of the paper. Some points of clarification were requested.
40. **The Board noted the flowchart supporting consideration of declarations of interests.**
41. **Actions:**
- i. **Put in Board induction pack**
 - ii. **Laminated copies of annex for board meetings**

Convener and Board Elections (Paper 9)

42. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 9 which notifies members that the election for the position of Convener will take place at the following Board meeting, to be held in September 2018, and summarise the process for this election. It also highlights that elections for directly elected Board members are due to take place in March 2019.
43. **The Board :**
- a) **Agreed that the election of Board Convener will take place at the next Board meeting, on 28 September 2018.**
 - b) **Noted that the CNPA Standing Orders set out the process for election of Convener. These paragraphs have been extracted and set out in the Annex to this paper for ease of reference.**
 - c) **Noted that the time input of the Convener, and the basis for payment, is currently 2 days per week, as opposed to time input of members of 3 days each month.**

44. **Actions: None**

AOCB

45. Members noted a press release this morning, that a golden eagle nest had been disturbed and egg stolen in Badenoch and Strathspey.
46. Members were advised that Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) had contacted a number of public bodies and the subject of board members' expenses and the potential for these to be subject to tax where members were travelling regularly to the same place of work. On analysis, David Cameron had determined that this does not apply to Cairngorms NPA members, who conduct their business for the Authority around the park and their home is their effective place of work. Kate Christie will write formally to members, designating their home as their official workplace for CNPA business. Members will need to complete a health and safety form and return to CNPA in terms of workplace use for business. Expenses will not be subject to tax as the HMRC regulations were not applicable to CNPA circumstances.
47. Evening before next board meeting, Cairngorms Connect presentation would be taking place. The evening session in December would cover the Rails to Grantown project, subject to progress with this project.
48. Grant reminded members of the Europarc Conference 18 – 21 September
49. **Actions:**
i. **Kate Christie to write to members on home designation as their workplace.**

Date of Next Meeting

50. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 28 September 2018, The Albert Hall, Ballater.
51. The Public part of this meeting concluded at 14.45.