

# **CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK VISIT FORUM**

**Meeting held on Wednesday 15th December at 10.00am  
at MacDonald Fours Seasons Hotel, Aviemore**

## **Present**

Bruce Luffman (Chair)  
Danny Alexander  
Scott Armstrong  
Elaine Booth  
Alex Burns-Smith  
Alister Clunas  
Sandy Dear  
Sally Dowden  
Lucia Campbell  
Peter Crane  
Patricia Eccles  
Murray Ferguson  
Heather Galbraith  
Jim Gillies  
Fred Gordon  
John Grant  
Andrew Harper  
Paul Higson  
George Inglis  
Bob Kinnaid  
Andrew Kirk  
Pierre Masson  
James Macfarlane  
Mick Pawley  
Helen Powell  
Andy Rockall  
Debbie Strang

Auld Cummerton, Strathdon  
CNPA  
HOST  
Scottish Enterprise Grampian  
Pine Bank Chalets  
Mar Lodge Estate  
Tourism and the Environment Forum  
Speyside Wildlife  
Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board  
CNPA  
Nethy House, Nethy Bridge  
Cairngorms National Park Authority  
Cairngorms National Park Authority  
Forestry Commission  
Aberdeenshire Council  
SRPBA  
Cairngorms National Park Authority  
ECAP Project Co-ordinator  
Ballater Royal Deeside  
Cairngorm Mountain  
Cairn Hotel  
Moray Council  
Muckrach Lodge Hotel, Dulnain Bridge  
Angus Council  
Highland Folk Park  
SNH  
Cairngorms National Park Authority

## **Apologies**

Neil Black  
Simon Blackett  
Andrew Coleman  
Willie Colville  
Ian Dunlop  
Roger Edwards  
Alistair Gronbach  
Gary Marsden  
James Milne  
Caroline Mitchell  
Elma McMenemy  
Syd Smardon  
Elizabeth Thompson  
Tim Walker  
Drennan Watson  
Andrew Wells  
Bob Wilson

VisitScotland  
Braemar Tourist Association  
UDAT  
Phase One- Fun  
Aberdeen & Grampian Tourist Board  
MBSE  
Visitscotland  
Balmoral Estate  
Kinross House, Grantown  
Aberlour Distillery  
Royal Deeside and Mearns Tourism Forum  
Speyside Highlnd Leisure Park  
Dalwhinnie Distillery  
Sportscotland Glenmore Lodge  
Scottish LINK  
Glenlivet Estate, Tomintoul  
Aberdeen & Grampian Tourist Board

## **In Attendance**

Jeremy Quinn

Lowland Market Research

## **Welcome and Apologies**

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the new members of the Forum, as well as Jeremy Quinn of Lowland Market Research, and noted the apologies.

## **Transition of Working Group to Advisory Forum**

2. Paper 1 was tabled and Murray Ferguson briefly outlined the group remit, membership and method of operation. The remit of the group is to provide advice to the Cairngorms National Park Authority in its development and implementation of policies and strategies on visitor services, tourism and information provision within the Park. Membership is drawn by invitation from a variety of public and private sector organisations, groups and individuals. Meetings will take place approximately quarterly.

## **Minutes of the Meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> May 2004 and Matters Arising**

3. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with the correction that Derek Reid had been Chief Executive rather than Chairman of the Scottish Tourist Board.
4. Pete Crane advised that the touch screen visitor information system which the NPA was considering piloting, operated by Highland Media Links (*I point*) was no longer an option as the company had gone into liquidation.
5. Scott Armstrong advised that the Aviemore TIC should relocate to their new premises in January 2005.
6. Heather Galbraith updated the forum on the training initiatives discussed at the last meeting. The exhibition follow-up training has not yet been progressed, but will be considered as part of the CNPA involvement in Expo 2005. The development of a product knowledge training course, in association with Tourist Board Training, is ongoing and this work has been contracted to Moray College.
7. Paul Higson distributed the latest edition of the ECAP (Eastern Cairngorms Access Project) Newsletter, and noted that ECAP had won the SEG innovation award at the Northern Lights Awards. The question was asked why there was no similar project for the Western Cairngorms. Paul Higson outlined the background to the project which was set up to address specific issues in the Eastern Cairngorms, prior to the Park Authority and is due to run until 2006. Murray Ferguson stressed that projects originating before the National Park designation would run their course, and similar projects existed on the western side of the Park, however, the work of the Park Authority, notably on the Outdoor Access Strategy and Interpretation Strategy, has been in a park-wide context, and this will be the case for major projects.

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## **Marketing Strategy Action Plan**

8. Paper 2 was tabled, and the enabling nature of the CNPA in this process was highlighted where delivery will be through appropriate groups and agencies. The draft action plan

has been discussed with the ATBs and VisitScotland, and will be reviewed in light of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. It was suggested that the action plan should be a standing item on the agenda to take stock of progress on a regular basis.

9. It was stressed that discussions about the role of National Parks and the emerging VisitScotland integrated network are ongoing.
10. Comments on the Action Plan included that any identification and delivery of training courses should not duplicate the work of the Local Enterprise Companies. The issue of quality standards was also discussed, and it is felt that this will be partly addressed by setting criteria for use of the new CNP brand.
11. The action plan will be monitored through future market research and application of the STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) model. The STEAM model has been commissioned by the CNPA this year, and will use the CNP visitor survey, occupancy, bed stock, day visitor, attraction attendance & postcode data to build up a 'bottom-up' statistical picture of the area. Outputs that will be calculated include total visitor numbers, tourist days, revenue analysis & levels of employment.

### **Cairngorms Visitor Survey**

12. Jeremy Quinn from Lowland Market Research presented a summary of the findings of the 2003/2004 Cairngorms Visitor Survey. The full results and a user-friendly summary of key points will be available in the New Year.

### **Ranger Services in the Park**

13. Paper 3 was tabled and Pete Crane gave a short presentation on the current arrangements for ranger services in the park and potential routes forward for a park-wide approach to ranger services in the future.

### **Project Updates**

14. Sustainable Tourism Strategy. Debbie Strang said that the workshop on 27th October had been well-attended and the information gathered is being fed into the development of the strategy. A draft report will be circulated to the Forum prior to the next meeting for comment.
15. Pride and Passion. Bob Kinnaird gave a short presentation on the Pride and Passion campaign which aims to change attitudes within the tourism industry and ensure that Scotland consistently offers visitors a distinctive and exceptional experience in a relaxed and authentic way every time
16. Cairngorms Visitor Guide. Heather Galbraith updated on the 2005/2006 Visitor Guide. Final changes are being made and the Cairngorms brand will be incorporated. The guide will be launched as part of the brand launch in early March and discussions on the 2006/2007 guide will take place early in the new year.
17. Point of Entry Signage. Debbie Strang gave a brief update on the Point of Entry signage project and explained that due to the complexity of the project, some 31 points of entry across 4 local authority area, the Park Board have endorsed the erection of metal signs at

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key entry points prior to the start of the next summer tourist season. Further design and developmental work on the granite structures is also continuing.

18. Directional and Pre-arrival Signage. Murray Ferguson advised that Angus Council had approached the CNPA about signage to the park from the A90, and a blue logo for brown signs will be developed as part of the branding exercise so that it can be incorporated into the new brown signs
19. However the provision of brown and directional signs to and within the park; and the rationalisation and removal of redundant signs is an area of work that the CNPA will look at in 2005.

### **Cairngorms Branding Update**

20. Danny Alexander and Heather Galbraith gave a presentation on development of the CNP brand. Three potential visual identities had been worked up by Navyblue Design, on the advice of the branding steering group. These three identities have been market tested by Scott Porter Research through small focus groups of stakeholders and consumers.
24. A less formal process of market testing was also conducted by Danny Alexander and Heather Galbraith, who gave a presentation to a variety of stakeholder groups, including the Association of Cairngorms Community Councils and Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce. As well as seeking feedback on the visual identities there was also an opportunity for these groups to discuss the way in which the brand would be rolled out and made available for use by stakeholders.

### **AOCB**

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 16th February at 10.15 at the Supper Rooms, Albert Hall, Station Square, Ballater.

*The meeting ended at 13:30*

**Heather Galbraith**

December 2004