
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at The Clova Hall, Glen Clova on Friday 16th May 2008 at 11.30am

PRESENT

Stuart Black	Ian Mackintosh
Geva Blackett	Mary McCafferty
Duncan Bryden	Eleanor Mackintosh
Nonie Coulthard	Fiona Murdoch
Jaci Douglas	Sandy Park
Lucy Grant	Andrew Rafferty
David Fallows	Richard Stroud
David Green (Convenor)	Susan Walker
Marcus Humphrey	

In Attendance:

Bob Grant
David Cameron
Jane Hope

Apologies:

Eric Baird	Alastair MacLennan
Drew Hendry	Anne MacLean
Bob Kinnaird	Bruce Luffman
William McKenna	Ross Watson

Welcome

1. The Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting, the first in the Clova Hall. He noted that the previous evening the Board had held its usual open public meeting and there had been some interesting discussion, in particular on the increasing use of substantial electrified fences which were significantly impeding rights of access. It appeared that these examples were all just outside the National Park, but nevertheless provided an interesting insight into an issue that might in due course become an issue for the National Park.

Minutes of Last Meeting – approval

2. Minutes of the last meeting on 20th March 2008 were approved with no changes.

Matters Arising

3. Jane Hope reported, further to Paragraph 12 of the previous minutes, that the Corporate Plan for 2008/11 had been submitted to the Scottish Government for approval. [Approval subsequently received on 19th May.] The Operational Plan 2008/09 had been revised and approved by the Finance Committee that morning.

Declarations of Interest

4. Marcus Humphrey declared an interest in respect of paper 1 as a Director of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust, and withdrew from this item.

Nominations for the Board of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) and Contribution Towards the Trust's First Business Plan (Paper 1)

5. Bob Grant and David Cameron introduced the paper which sought the Board's approval for two nominees as Directors of the COAT and for a contribution of £150,000 from the CNPA towards the delivery of the Trust's 2008/09 Business Plan. The proposal was that in view of the skills and knowledge required by the Trust and the importance of ensuring that the Trust membership reflected the geography of the National Park, the two CNPA nominees should be the Head of Corporate Services and a Board Member from an appropriate area of the National Park – currently this implied someone from the west side of the Park given the spread of the rest of the COAT membership. The contribution of £150,000 from the CNPA was acknowledged as representing quite high gearing from the CNPA, but reflecting the newness of the Trust and the important role of the CNPA in providing a lead to other partners, who it was hoped would also contribute to this Trust, given that the intention was to benefit the whole of the National Park.
6. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) There was some further discussion about the composition of the Board of Directors on the COAT. This was set out at Paragraph 2. Membership was not open to individuals but to organisations who could nominate Directors. However, once on the Board, each Director was required to act in the best interests of the company. The Memorandum and Articles of association were not specific about geographical spread or other issues; but there was a duty on the Board of Directors to ensure that they were able to deliver the objects of the Trust. So in practice no organisation could control or manage the composition of the Board, indeed one of the requirements of charitable status was that no member could have a

controlling interest. However, the CNPA through its two nominations, had some limited scope to make nominations to ensure appropriate geographical spread.

- b) Current membership appeared to be very much based on land management/nature conservation interests. It would be good to see a wider membership, for example drawn from the Chamber of Commerce, the Destination Management Organisations etc. reflecting the fact that the objects of the Trust included wider public benefit, which surely included economic benefit. It was acknowledged that the CNPA would like to see the Trust develop in that way; however, it was early days and the important thing was to demonstrate first of all that the Trust was able to deliver. Hopefully the two Directors nominated by the CNPA would encourage the Trust Board to recognise these points and ultimately the financial contribution from the CNPA could be used to similarly encourage the Trust to take that approach.
- c) There appeared to be no one on the Trust with a Park-wide recreational interest. However it was acknowledged that there were many representative bodies concerned with recreation and sport and it was very difficult to pick just one. However there was merit in ensuring someone from the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum was able to sit on the Trust to ensure linkage between the two bodies.
- d) The important point at the start of the life of the Trust was to concentrate on credibility. The Trust was a new body, and not simply an extension of UDAT to the west side of the Park. It would be important to have someone on the Board of Directors who was from the west side of the Park, and had the ability to attract money into the Trust.
- e) The Trust was intended to be a delivery organisation and not a grant giving organisation.
- f) It was noted that discussions had been held with all local authorities regarding contributions to the trust. The difficulty was that once the CNPA was the Access Authority, local authorities tended to feel that they did not need to contribute to the funding of path works and maintenance within the National Park. A notable and very welcome exception to this was Aberdeenshire Council who continued to contribute. The CNPA continued to try and persuade the other councils about the benefits of the Park to their own areas and hence the rationale for them contributing to the work of the Trust. It was noted that there was huge public benefit at stake which went well beyond the Access legislation and the duties of Access Authorities and there was a very strong argument for councils to contribute.
- g) The development of the COAT was acknowledged as a really important mechanism for delivering public benefits through good walking opportunities. It was excellent that the Trust was now up and running; it was potentially very important in respect of health

promotion and the NHS should be approached as potential contributors.

- h) It was suggested that there should be a follow up paper for the Board to consider setting out the arguments that the Board would like to see the two CNPA nominees take to the Trust, setting these in the context of the strategy being developed within the Park for outdoor recreation and access opportunities.
- i) Dave Fallows was proposed by Eleanor Mackintosh as COAT Director, seconded by Duncan Bryden.

7. The Board agreed the recommendations of the papers as follows:

- a) Agreed that there would be two nominees as Directors of the COAT, one of whom would be Head of Corporate Services.**
- b) Agreed that Dave Fallows should be the Board Member nominee (both of these nominations to be for four years);**
- c) Approved a contribution of £150,000 towards the delivery of the Trust's 2008/09 business plan.**

8. Action:

- a) Bob Grant to bring forward a further Board paper setting out the CNPA's ideas on how the Trust might usefully develop over the medium to long term as a vehicle for delivering a high quality path network in the Cairngorms National Park.**

Operational Plan 2007/08 Update (Paper 2)

- 9. This was an information paper reporting on the final quarter of delivery of the Operational Plan 2007/08; this also represented the final report on the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2005/08. Members congratulated staff on the comprehensive delivery of both that Corporate Plan and the 2007/08 Operational Plan.

AOCB

- 10. Geva Blackett reported on a recent nature exchange visit made to Norway under the Leonardo Da Vinci Exchange Programme. This had proved an extremely useful way of bringing together different perspectives and view points on nature conservation and land management and Colin McClean was thanked for his efforts in organisation.

- 11. The Convener reported on a number of meetings he had attended recently:

- a) Fiona Spencer - conducting the Strategic Review of National Parks;
- b) Angus Council - the Convener and Chief Executive had met a small group of members and staff from Angus Council all of whom were very positive towards the National Park.

- c) Perth and Kinross Council – the Convener, Chief Executive and a number of Board Members had made contact with Perth and Kinross Council for an informal meeting. It was noted that SNH had been appointed to undertake the boundary review and there was scope to use some of their consultation meetings to help build levels of understanding and ownership of the Cairngorms National Park.
- d) It was noted that the SEARS project would be announced by Ministers at the Royal Highland Show on Friday the 20th June. The CNPA would be present and Members were asked to indicate if they would be on the stand at any point.
- e) Greener Scotland meeting – the Convener and Chief Executive had attended a meeting at which Richard Lochhead, John Swinney, and Jonathan Porritt had all given talks about delivering the Greener Scotland Agenda. The talks had all been inspirational and had focused on the need not just to join up but to embed the greening aspiration in every single policy; in other words we were all responsible for delivering the greener agenda.
- f) Tourism. There had been some follow up to the informal discussion about tourism on the 18th April. The Convener had started discussions with the various DMOs as well as business groupings in Angus and Perth and Kinross to develop the idea of a more joined up concerted approach to delivering the tourism product to visitors as well as supporting the tourism businesses across the Park. The aim, emerging from the informal discussion, was to ensure that this was business-led, taking advantage of those things that could be done collectively across the National Park, while maintaining the identity and diversity of the various areas within the Park. A meeting had been held to explore the principles and all those concerned were considering this further.
- g) Advisory Forums - the three Advisory Forums were being held on Wednesday 21st May (Enjoying and Understanding the Park), Thursday 22nd May (Living and Working in the Park), Wednesday 11th June (Conserving and Enhancing). Board Members were encouraged to attend these advisory forums, which had been established to ensure a good two way dialogue between the Board and others with an interest in delivery of the National Park Plan.
- h) Strategic Review – progress on this would be reported to the Board once the remit for the review had been approved by Ministers. However, in the meantime it was noted that Ministers had committed to there being a consultation on the Strategic Review, and the working assumption was that this would mean input into the review itself, as well as consultation on its proposed outputs.

Date and Venue of Next Meeting

12. Friday 11th July, Braemar Village Hall.