
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

- Title:** UPDATE AND FORWARD LOOK
- Prepared by:** Douglas Stewart, Outdoor Access Officer
- Purpose:** This paper provides an update on the main areas of work both undertaken and planned towards delivery of the five year outcomes in the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17.

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2012-17.

Long term outcome: People enjoying the Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences

Key work package 9 - Active Cairngorms

1. **Active Cairngorms Strategy** – This will focus CNPA actions towards activity which benefits health for the 5 years it will be in place. The strategy has now received CNPA board approval and has been formally adopted.
2. **CNP Health Walks Programme – Update**
 - a) The Scottish Government has launched Legacy 2014 Physical Activity Fund. One year funding (up to £70k) is available to scale up existing physical activity projects. CNPA intends to submit an application towards.
 - b) 6 new volunteers have been recruited for new walking to health group in Tomintoul. Walks now held weekly.
 - c) The Dufftown Medical Practice and Aboyne Medical Practice are very keen to take part in self referral/GP referral and a GP led feedback evaluation. This follows interest from Aviemore, Grantown and Tomintoul Practices.
 - d) Volunteer Health Walk Leader Training Course held in Richmond Hall, Tomintoul. 7 new recruits from Tomintoul and 5 from other Cairngorms groups/partners, including Autism Development Officer, Moray Health and Social Care.
 - e) 2 health walk volunteers will attend the Active Cairngorms/Speyside Way extension event with Scottish Government Minister on 12 September and lead a short health walk.

Key work package 12 - Visitor and access infrastructure

3. **Management of core paths and outdoor access:**
 - a) **Asbestos related path closures, Carrbridge:** – Investigations are ongoing towards determining the source of asbestos contamination of a section of path at Ellan Wood. Indications so far suggest aggregate used in the path construction has

been contaminated with white asbestos. A 750m section of path has been temporarily closed as a result.

- b) **Ellan Bridge, Carrbridge** – CNPA grant of £3k spent on repairs to this important pedestrian bridge. Work is now complete and includes replacement of the bridge deck with a non-slip type and repairs to a damaged concrete abutment.
- c) **Speyside Way Extension** – The first phase in the planned extension of the Speyside Way from Aviemore to Kingussie is now complete with a new multi-use path linking Aviemore and Kincaig. The path will be officially opened on Saturday 12th September 2015 by the Scottish Government Minister for Sport, Health Improvement and Mental Health, Jamie Hepburn MSP. The CNPA is now seeking funding for a further phase.
- d) **Cambus O' May Site Management Plan** – Joanna Dick, Dee Catchment Outreach Officer is presently preparing a site management plan for this popular Deeside visitor site. She is currently gathering information about visitor profile and what improvements visitors might like to see carried out. This information is being collected throughout the summer period via face to face questionnaires. CNPA have advised on matters of priority including improvement to the long-standing problem gates at each side of the bridge.
- e) **Upholding Access Rights** – access casework continues to be reported and dealt with according to protocols. An update will be presented under Agenda Item 2.

2015/16 Financial Planning

- 4. Public sector finance continues to be subject to downward pressure due to ongoing spending constraints and as a result the operational budget for CNPA Access Team during 2015-16 is significantly reduced from previous years.
- 5. Budget allocations are such that there will be no discretionary capital available for spend during the forthcoming financial year. We will therefore be focussing on partnership projects where opportunity exists to lever in additional contribution against projects already underway or as new grant funding.

Other National Park Initiatives/Matters

- 6. **Capercaillie Framework** – People monitoring research is underway gathering data at two potential refuge creation sites where paths are being considered for removal. Monitoring is also underway to obtain baseline data at sites where there is anticipated development pressure. Further consultation will be had with the mountain bike community before any monitoring is undertaken to assess mountain bike effects at Kinveachy. Early work is underway with a pilot community project, which could include off-lead dog walking areas, schools work, arts projects, etc. A funding enquiry application is being submitted to HLF for delivery of many of the recommendations within the Framework, including those for recreation management.
- 7. **HLF Tomintoul / Glenlivet** – A stage I bid for HLF Funding for the Tomintoul / Glenlivet Landscape Partnership has been successful with the CNPA as lead partner in

this first phase. The CNPA Access Team are currently working with the TGLP Project Team to draw up specifications for £360k of access focussed improvements including upgrade of 7km of the Speyside Way spur at Tomintoul. A further 2km of local path will also receive upgrade/improvement. A summary sheet outlining the various project initiatives is attached.

8. **A9 Dualling** – Following a second meeting of the Non-Motorised Users Forum in Perth on 26 May, Transport Scotland are set to prepare an access strategy for the A9 dualling scheme. A draft has been prepared with the final document intended to ensure all relevant policy and matters of principle are covered. The Strategy will then be used to inform the development of each section of the scheme in respect of non-motorised users. A report of the 26 May meeting is available.
9. **Ruthven Bridge Closure** – The B970 road at Ruthven Bridge, Kingussie will be closed to vehicles and pedestrians from Wednesday 29 July for six weeks and is programmed to re-open on 11 September 2015. The closure affects National Cycle Route 7 (core path) and may affect users of the Spey including the agreed paddler access point. CNPA has advised Highland Council of the relevant considerations in respect of public access

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