

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING of

THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**held via Microsoft Teams
on 3rd March 2023 at 09.30am**

Present

Xander McDade (Chair)
Janet Hunter
Deirdre Falconer

William Munro
Gaener Rodger
Fiona Mclean

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, CEO
Oliver Davies, Head of Communications
Hannah Frank, Cairngorms Youth Action Team
Robert Cairn, Cairngorms Youth Action Team
Alan Smith, Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager
Mariaan Pita, Executive Support Manager
James Ade, Clerk to Board

Apologies:

Welcome and Apologies

1. Xander McDade, Board Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Governance Committee.

Declarations of Interest

2. There were no interests declared.

Minutes of Previous Meetings & Matters Arising

3. The minutes of the previous meeting, 20th January 2023, held via video conferencing were **approved**.
4. **Action points arising from previous meeting:**
 - a) **At Para 17i) In Hand** – Board skills matrix survey monkey questionnaire to be repeated in June 2023.
 - b) **At Para 19a In Hand** – Planning Committee Induction training to be opened up to existing Board Members as a refresher.

- c) **At Para 19b In Hand** – Second Board Effectiveness session with the Board and Senior Staff facilitated by David Robertson of WildThinking to be scheduled for May 2023.

12th August meeting

- d) **At Para 14b** Postal ballot to remain in place for time being.
- e) **At Para 20i** Director of Corporate Services to make addition to Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference.
- f) **At Para 25i** Board Convener to hold a further detailed discussion with Planning Committee Convener and Vice-Convener and Deputy Board Convener on what a Board Consultation may look like.
- g) **At Para 28i** Board Representation on External Groups to be updated once new Board Members are in post.

20th January meeting

- h) **At Para 9i** Review our Governance Responsibility Framework. Director of Corporate Services to bring a paper to a future meeting to reconsider.
- i) **At Para 12i** Director of Corporate Services to draft a follow up paper required to set out potential options for the Governance Committee.
- j) **At Para 15i** Clerks to Board (January / February 2024): agenda item for review of planning committee arrangements. Open
- k) **At Para 19i - Closed** Clerk to the Board to distribute the document for members to put themselves forward.
- l) **At para 19ii** Head of Communications to look at communication messaging around appropriate places to take bikes linking to Director of Corporate Services follow up (24(ii)).

5. **Action Point Arising:** **None.**

Cairngorms Youth Action Team (Oral)

- 6. Cairngorms Youth Action Team (CYAT) raised concerns over the lack of representation of the 'youth voice' in the park and how greater communication and interaction between the board and CYAT could help.
- 7. The Governance Committee discussed the update and made the following comments and observations:
 - a) The Convener raised that having the CYAT join board visit days would allow them to have an impact on the board. Additionally, this interaction would be more beneficial at the influencing stage rather than at Formal Board sessions. Members agreed that the CYAT should be involved at an engagement stage, prior to the Formal Board sessions. Robert Cairn agreed that there should be revision of how the CYAT communicates with the board, moving to a more regular informal interaction either on a rolling basis or through a rep system.

- b) It was suggested that having Board Members joining CYAT volunteer days would be important to keep as a key point of contact. Additionally, Board Members should rotate so that a wider pool of awareness is achieved, to which other members agreed.
- c) A member raised that there needs to be time made to feed back the interactions between Board Members and the CYAT to the wider Board. Additionally, where the CYAT is having issues with implementing the Youth Manifesto, mechanisms are needed to ensure the Board is made aware, and barriers can be removed. There could be space in the Performance Committee for the CYAT to report back to the Board.
- d) Members asked how the CYAT recruit members, suggesting that it could be 'sold' as a volunteering opportunity to those doing the Duke of Edinburgh or John Muir awards; and through going into schools. Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager stated that monthly events are used to inform young people of the CYAT and to try to get them to volunteer. Additionally, members have been gained through the youth fund.
- e) Grant Moir, CEO asked if there was a link between the CYAT and the Junior Ranger Project. Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager confirmed that CYAT members did attend Junior Ranger days, but he would like to see a strengthening of this link.
- f) A member asked whether the CYAT looked at recruiting from other youth organisations where members may be looking for volunteering opportunities. Robert Cairn replied that they are trying to target groups that they are not already representing. The member responded that they work with a group that supports young people in the Highlands with additional support needs, so would put it to them to see if there was interest.

8. **Action Point Arising:**

- i. **Convener and CEO** to find a Board business session day that the CYAT can attend.
- ii. **CYAT** to send date of Youth Camp at Badaguish Forest Lodges in August Event for Board Members to attend and what this would entail.
- iii. **Committee Members** to look at what partnership policy groups the Board could create youth links and where it might be appropriate to add youth representation.
- iv. **Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager** to strengthen links between the Junior Rangers and CYAT.

- v. **Convener** to send the dates of all this year's formal board sessions to the CYAT and to issue an invite to CYAT so they can attend as an observer.
- vi. **CYAT** to send to the Clerks to the Board and CEO suitable informal CYAT meeting dates for Board Members to attend.
- vii. **CYAT** and **Outdoor Learning and Engagement Manager** and **Director of Planning and Rural Development** to prepare a formal board report to present to the Board.

Communications Update (Paper 1)

- 9. Olly Davies, Head of Communications presented an update of current communications activity and outlined a number of key priorities for the next quarter.
- 10. The Governance Committee discussed the update and made the following comments and observations:
 - a) A member questioned whether directly elected members were informed on the Beaver Blethers drop-in sessions and the issues with the *Cairn* Magazine. Additionally, the member asked whether we give support to the Cairngorm Business Partnership through data from the visitor welcome app and how much is being spent on communications. Grant Moir, CEO responded that the costs are set out in the Operational Plan and the directly elected members have been made aware of the Beaver Blethers. Head of Communications informed members that issues around the *Cairn* magazine would be in the CEO report along with information on the visitor welcome app.
 - b) A member thanked Head of Communications for the work being done on equality, diversity and inclusion but questioned how the impact was being captured and evaluated. Head of Communications responded that as part of the LGBTQ+ charter we have to report back findings to LGBT Youth Scotland and so a detailed report has been pulled together. The report contains qualitative and quantitative learnings including how many people engage with posts, feedback directly from individuals as well as some of our staff drop-in sessions.
 - c) A member sought clarification on the tender process for the website design and whether it was ruling out website developers in the park. Head of Communications responded that due to the value of the contract developers have to go through Public Contracts Scotland, though that is publicly available to anyone. The communications team is currently looking at shortlisting local web developers who to make them aware of the contract. A member questioned whether it would

be possible to highlight the public tender process in the *Cairn* Magazine or on the website. Head of Communications agreed and suggested working with Cairngorms Business Partnership on raising awareness.

- d) A member raised concerns about the amount of litter on the side of the A9 in the park and questioned if there could be any communications about litter responsibility before the summer season. Head of Communications responded that the National Park works closely with Keep Scotland Beautiful each year on their 'Spring Clean' Campaign and have specific communications to put out around littering. CEO confirmed that he was in communication with Cairngorm Volunteers looking at doing some litter picking on the Big Help Out Day on 8th May.
- e) A member questioned whether the new website for Cairngorms Nature Festival was on schedule. Head of Communications reassured members that the website was on schedule.
- f) A member asked whether anything was being planned for the Park's 20th anniversary. Head of Communications responded that the planning stages for the celebrations have been delayed due to other work, but he is hoping to use the Cairngorms Nature Festival in May as a soft launch for the celebrations.

11. **The Convener concluded the discussion and thanked the Head of Communications for the update.**

12. **Actions:**

- i. **Head of Communications** to include issues around the *Cairn* magazine and information on the visitor welcome app CEO report.
- ii. **Head of Communications** to highlight tender process in the *Cairn* magazine and on the National Park's website. Additionally, to raise with the Cairngorm Business Partnership for them to highlight in their newsletter.

AOCB

13. Members were invited to raise any items of business. The following was raised:

- a) Grant Moir, CEO, made members aware that a Freedom of Information request relating to staff Register of Interest had been made by the Grampian Moreland Group. The National Park has applied an exemption under section 27 of the Freedom of Information Scotland Act and now have 12 weeks to publicly publish the information. The CEO asked Members if anyone had talked directly or indirectly with anyone from the Grampian Moreland Group. No Members came

forward saying they had any communication with the Group. A member observed that the 12-week period for releasing the information was a tight turn around, which the convener recognised and noted.

- b) Members raised that there was a cultural issue on the board rather than a governance issue. The Convener agreed and it would be raised with the Board on a number of training days lined up including equalities training in April. Members raised that specialists need to be brought in to give training to change the culture of the Board.

14. Action Point Arising:

- i. **Director of Corporate Services** to draft a paper on staff Register of Interest.
- ii. **Convener** to set up a special Governance Committee meeting on staff Register of Interest.
- iii. **Gaener Rodger** to feedback names and processes from the NHS highland to replicate work on Board culture.

Date of Next Meeting

- 15. The next meeting of the Governance Committee will take place on Friday 9th May 2023.
- 16. The meeting concluded at 11.09 hours.