

DRAFT

INCLUSIVE CAIRNGORMS
Meeting at 11.00am on Tuesday 19th June 2012
in the Community Hall, Boat of Garten

Present

Jane Gibson	Barnardo's Works Cairngorms
Saran Cleary	Barnardo's Works Cairngorms
Cliff Graham	Barnardo's Works Cairngorms
Morag Campbell	B&S Access Panel
Aileen Graham	B&S Access Panel
Alasdair Johnston	Aberdeen City Council
Eric Baird	Cairngorms Ranger Services
Jackie Cropper	Grand Central Savings
Kate Christie	CNPA
Anne MacLean	RNIB
Fraser Cardow	Cairngorm Construction Skills Project
Jim Brown (chairman)	Blackrock Productions
Elsbeth Grant	CNPA
Gordon Riddler	CNPA Board
Andrew Tait	CNPA Planning Department

Apologies

Liz Scott	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Elsbeth Kennedy	Highland Disabled Ramblers
Pammy Johal	Backbone
Sheila Fletcher	Community Transport Association
Gail Woodcock	Aberdeen City Council
Hazel McLaren	Marr Community Planning Group
Kevin Hutchens	Independent Social worker
Claire Ross	CNPA
Hector MacDonald	Scottish Disability Equality Forum
Carolyn Cornfield	Caberfeidh Horizons
Karine Suller	Planning Gain, Aberdeenshire Council
Morag Redwood	SCVO
Ivor Souter	Highland Council
David Atkinson	Scottish Rural Churches Group
Ruth Sim	West Aberdeenshire Access Panel

Welcome

1. The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were made as above.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

2. Minutes of Last meeting were approved subject to amendments recorded. Proposed by Gordon Riddler, seconded by Anne MacLean.

Matters arising from the Minutes

3. Ref para 3, EG wrote to all local authorities requesting assistance at service points for people with disabilities. Received a very good response from Angus, Highland, Moray and Aberdeenshire. By law they have to provide some form of service at polling stations

DRAFT

but AMacL raised the point that it was assistance with postal votes that are required. AMacL raised the issue that whilst there was a large poster of the Chief Executive and a rehab worker there was nothing in the Strathy reminding people that the visually impaired can have a secret ballot. AMacL will be talking to the Strathy as Councils did go to a lot of trouble to inform on the system and it seems a shame that it wasn't reported. JB asked if the Local Authority could possibly take an advert? **Action AMacL**

4. Ref para 4, requesting that Stewart Davidson is invited to come along to a meeting. EG did contact him but he is away at a youth conference these 2 days and in September he will no longer be in post. There will be a new convenor, so EG contact them for the future meeting. **Action EG**
5. Ref para 10, JC referred to Di Alexander's comments on Welfare Forum having implications on universal credit. JC thinks this will have huge implications and we should be addressing these issues sooner rather than later. We need it on the agenda for future discussion. **Action EG**
6. Ref para 10/11, EB noted that whilst there was a record of the previous presentation no mention of the noted responses were made. It would be more productive if the certain points and questions raised and the associated actions were recorded in the minutes. EG agreed and will look for the record of these and circulate. **Action EG**
7. Ref para 14, EG fed back to the Outdoor Access Team the meetings request for equality and diversity training for CNP rangers, they are going to look at this for future training.
8. Ref para 16, presentation today is regarding planning.
9. Ref para 26, EG has discussed internally and CNPA are reviewing their Outreach Project Plan in September whilst looking at barriers for outreach groups visiting the park, transport being just one of them. The CNPA want to look at issues Park wide and speak to the main players. EB mentioned that one of the groups he has been working with has expressed a desire to get involved in the John Muir Award and Junior Ranger programme – he will need as much support as he can get but feels it is fantastic that we have an organisation out with the area wanting to come in. EG reported that Jonathan Kitchin from Aberdeen City had also been in touch to make more use of the Cromdale Outdoor Centre, so there is clearly a need and desire to make it work.

Presentation by Andrew Tait CNPA Planning Department

10. People have lived in the Park for 100s of years, planning is about balancing the work and living requirements within the Park, whilst adhering to Scottish and Westminster Government directives. Balance is the key, and over time planning has changed more and more and will continue to change. Previously planning was very process driven but now planning looks more at outcomes and social inclusion, however, by being more sophisticated the system has become more complex. The vision in the past is definitely not the reality now i.e. streets in the sky!
11. The CNPA Planning Department look at achieving the aims of the Park Plan and yes there are often issues but likewise there are often solutions but overall the priority has

DRAFT

to be to protect the heritage of the Park. All public bodies and all partners of the process should make reference to the Park Plan in all decision making.

12. All policies being put into place on the Park Plan have to be tested to make sure they conform to the national policy. It is more towards the end of the process that monitoring and enforcement takes place so the earlier you get involved in the process the better. This way conflicts, confusion and negativity can be avoided and solutions found.
13. It should be noted that the Local Development Plan was not produced in isolation; it is subject to all sorts of influences many of which come from the National Park Plan. CNPA are currently waiting for ministerial approval and next year the plan will be published for consultation. AT made reference to a recent speech by David Cameron regarding planning applications, he was very critical of the process and he wants the presumption of applications to be in favour of development due to the economic crisis at the moment unless there are very good reasons for withholding permission. AT feels that he was speaking directly to planners so we have to take this on board.
14. EB asked does Westminster govern our Development Plan then? AT responded that DG covers planning but this is an example of how much emphasis is being placed upon economic growth given the current financial circumstances. This is reflected in the SG's emphasis on sustainable economic growth as its core purpose.
15. AT wanted to stress that when we talk about planning, it is all about producing good developments at the end of the day. The CNPA have a dual role with 5 local authorities, they only deal with a certain amount of applications, pre application is becoming more and more important and developers with over 50 houses have to have a pre application in place and these developers have also been asked to speak to Inclusive Cairngorms early on. There are also material considerations to take into place i.e. environment, flooding, safety, access, neighbouring community, is the proposal for a large and ugly building etc. There are however issues that are not planning considerations, these include financial circumstances, who gets affordable housing, whether wind turbines work, stabilising the electricity grid. As an example bins are not a planning issue, but it is an issue with the space for bins and the point AT wants to make is planning issues are generally about land use.
16. AT talked about monitoring and enforcement. There is a charter that sets out how, why, what and how the CNPA will respond however, enforcement is a tricky part of planning process. There are all sorts of legal negotiations, but there can be a negotiation point that they get to rather than resorting to law and they would rather give some practical advice on how to change things rather than formal enforcement action. At this point AT showed some slides regarding interesting designs that passed planning approval. He reiterated that CNPA are continually trying to improve the planning service and welcome any suggestions, likewise on their website there is a competition asking people to vote for the best design within the Park.
17. JB asked about the call in criteria. AT responded about it being a bit of a dark art, it's about judgement, there are different things that affect the decision. When the Plan was first started the CNPA were hoping there could be some sort of mathematical equation but there isn't, if something is particularly large or in a sensitive area its likely to be

DRAFT

called-in. Over time they have built up a track record based on size, significance, environmental sensitivity, so for example a wind turbine in one site that is ok, on another site it's possibly not. Again they make a recommendation to members and the members say whether they agree or not.

18. AT is keen to know what planning projects Inclusive Cairngorms are interested in commenting on, at what point does IC want to be advised. As an example there is a pre-application for a kart track on the edge of Aviemore, also a new caravan site to the north of Aviemore. AT is concerned about access issues from Aviemore and would like feedback from the meeting. **Action All**
19. MC recently read an article in the press saying you no longer needed planning permission for small extensions – what is the situation as there seems to be some confusion? AT responded that generally if you want a conservatory on the back of the house would not be an issue, however, if it is going out towards a public road it would be likely to require PP. Three months ago the legislation was reviewed and it tells you what you can do without planning permission and there is a lot more you can do to the house and garden now. Having said that, AT feels it was an attempt by the Scottish government to simplify, but actually it seems there is now more confusion. AT recommends that you should always write into the local council and ask advice – ie. When you go to sell the house and the solicitor asks for the planning permission, get it in writing from the local authority that none was required.
20. EB asked about the scope of planning and what it is considered out of scope i.e. land use, farming, forestry etc? Are hill tracks for any development for farming or forestry exempt? AT thinks this is an interesting point as within the CNP there has been an issue with hill tracks. Things have changed, you may require a licence from SNH but don't require planning permission, generally, tracks for sporting purposes DO require planning. But you do have the difficulty in that tracks are used for both, and it is down to the CNPA to determine why has the landowner has made the track, is it purely for farming or is it to facilitate the track for sporting purposes without getting planning permission. The Scottish Government have put forward proposals for taking practically all of these tracks INTO planning permission required and so far land owners have not said very much but now they have raised concerns with the Scottish Government and a meeting was being held that day (19th June). Ultimately there have been good and bad examples i.e. where there is a lot of sedimentation and landscape damage more control is possibly a good thing, although land owners need some flexibility. EB stated that if it was in development control we could set some standards.
21. EB stated that some planning authorities publish on line many of the planning proposals, is this for commercial only or residential as well and can CNPA do something similar? When AT talks to the access panel it is usually access up to the point of the building, if there is a sizeable planning application he feels it is good to consult Inclusive Cairngorms. EB asked what the scope of these consultations are as for example there is often an issue for access with hides, sporting , EB suggested that he will give a link to the guidance he has seen. **Action EB**
22. AMaL raised a development that was not brought to the Inclusive Cairngorms; the work in the square outside Boat of Garten station which is being beautifully done up to encourage visitors and locals. The CNPA did consult with AMaL and some wheelchair

DRAFT

users, both of which made a number of suggestions that have been included in the works but it is interesting because AMaCL feels this is something that should have been brought to Inclusive Cairngorms as it is a large public space. Curious as to why it hadn't been called in? Another point is a development in Aviemore has a group of housing on a shared surface AMaCL argued that the delineation was in colour and that the developers should consult with the access panel and Inclusive Cairngorm. However, all this good practice means nothing when in this case a reporter came back and didn't put any conditions in the report. So how do we educate reporters? AT mentioned another case where the reporter deleted the amount of affordable housing so yes the CNPA know that there is an issue and they will reiterate their concerns to them. EB asked if there is a court of appeal? AT responded that you can appeal to the Court of Session but it is very expensive and it is on procedural issues only however, you would get your expenses if you win. AT mentioned that the CNPA local plan is being challenged at the moment, the judge who is overseeing happens to be the one who said that smaller groups should have protected costs, this was to allow ordinary people access to the judicial system, even though protected costs can still be £20,000. EB stated that if it is a good case in principal then it might be worth an organisation setting that pace. Some of these organisations do have lots of members!

23. AT raised the applications he would like feedback on first. The kart track north of Aviemore which will include a car park and visitor centre on 2 hectares of land – is this something we would have interest in? EB responded that in terms of procedure there is a list published of applications and Inclusive Cairngorm could have access to this and if there is anything of particular interest then yes the meeting would discuss. The other application that AT raised was the replacement of a footbridge, as this will be heavily used by the general public then yes Inclusive Cairngorm would like to be consulted on this.

CNPA Public Duties

Equality Duties

24. EG gave an update on the equality duties with regards to the public sector, and their impact on CNPA. The specific duties came into force on 27th May:
- The development of equality outcomes - need to be in place by next April.
 - Mainstreaming report on the internal processes in terms of the CNPA's human resources. To be completed by next April and updated every 2 years.
 - Equality impact assessments of projects and policies from now
 - Gathering employee information and publish yearly, which they do already anyway along with the equal pay statement.
 - Review of procurement process so that equality opportunities are met i.e. who are awarded contracts with the CNPA, again they have been looking at that anyway so it's just a case of tightening up.
25. The CNPA are carrying out these reviews jointly with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Park Authority as their work and corporate plans are broadly similar. KC had nothing further to add.

Outdoor Access.

DRAFT

26. EG noted the recent development with Speyside Way extension between Aviemore and Newtonmore. The CNPA used its outdoor access powers to secure the route through Kinrara estate. The next step is going for planning permission and funding. Inclusive Cairngorms will be consulted in due course.

Planning

27. EG reported back on the planning application to extend the cemetery at Tullich, Ballater, on which Inclusive Cairngorms had been consulted. A response had been fed back to AT and the team, it will be discussed on Friday 22 June, EG said thanks for comments.

Young People

28. Fraser Cardow introduced himself to the meeting stating that he is new to the area and new to post with Cairngorm Construction Skills Project who are working with the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust, who take fourteen 16-24 year olds, generally unemployed who are living in social housing, put them into college at Inverness for 3 days a week with 2 days a week working on a project or training. This lasts for 1 year (36 weeks). FC is project manager and is currently focusing on advertising for new applications from young adults looking for an opportunity for some focus and direction. FC is aiming to get more applications than they have had previously as the number of applications had an impact on last year's course so they are advertising as much as possible so if anyone has databases, names, contacts, friends, relatives, neighbours please mention the scheme. FC is raising awareness of the project and trying to programme work placements and community placements. Contractors and enterprise groups consultation is in place and FC wants to have everything set in place with targets so there is no ambiguity. Will share his details with the meeting and would be grateful if anyone has any ideas.
29. AMaL asked if the scheme would encompass young people with disabilities. FC is not sure at the moment as the level of supervision is an issue. The question has been raised already but construction sites might be an issue. Barnardo's have a mentoring system but Cairngorm Construction don't have this in place yet but it will be looked at. FC mentioned that there is funding in place however decisions need to be made as to where to focus the funding. The target group are predominantly boys who can be a handful so funding for supervision levels has to be concentrated.
30. AJ mentioned that he is in contact with police and community workers and they can incorporate up to a 1/3 of the time spent with young people in active learning so this might be a possible source of assistance to FC. SC mentioned to FC there is a youth employment forum group on 26th June at the YMCA in Grantown at 10.30am.
31. KC mentioned that the CNPA have just appointed a young school leaver as a modern apprenticeship. She pointed out that the Youth Employment Agenda is very important for CNPA, and that this is just a small step, but may encourage other businesses in the National park area to follow suit. Skills Development Scotland feels that very few businesses within the Park are supporting apprenticeships and they should be encouraged. KC is happy to talk businesses through our experience with modern apprenticeship students if anyone knows of businesses who may be interested.
32. CG gave an update on Barnardo's Works Cairngorms. The service has gone through a redesign and provision that is provided will be split across 2 work teams, one Highland

DRAFT

and Moray and the other is Aberdeenshire, Angus, Perth and Kinross. Have picked up some 'get ready for work' contracts in the Aberdeen and Perth and Kinross area they have also secured some in Moray as well. The service is taking a wider rural approach by developing activity agreements in Moray and Aberdeenshire. These activity agreements are for young people who are not working and not ready to step into full training, the applicants tend to be aged 16-19 and the agreements are supporting people from a broad range of backgrounds, foster placements, in care etc. There is scope for longer involvement with young people with disabilities. Barnardo's are keen to develop links within the Park. There is also support available through Community Jobs Scotland and there are various placements from hospitality through to agricultural.

33. KC mentioned that the CNPA has just sponsored a "get ready for work" young person through the Calman Trust and asked if office work was included with the Barnados scheme. Yes it is. CG went on to say that apprenticeships are the next step, however, some young people move into employment quite quickly but others need a bit longer. KC asked CG how they are promoting the scheme and CG replied that due to the recent restructuring there is a new push to carry out a promotional campaign regarding the availability of these schemes. Development Scotland are aware of what Barnardo's do and they are also members of the Cairngorm Business Partnership.

Disability

34. AMaL reported that the bus stop project is still on-going and that this time next week will have cleared the final report. Then it will go to the Roads for All committee. The main problem behind it is funding to actually upgrade the bus stops; however, AMaL is still hopeful that there might be money to deal with the Aviemore station entrance. Unfortunately ScotRail do not have money and this seems to be a shame after all the work on the hub outside.
35. Something that has come out of the bus stop project is that Highland Council have asked Halcrow to carry out a short training exercise for community councillors with an emphasis on disability. They are hoping to get a good turn out from community councils as they were disappointed with the interest previously.
36. AMaL reported there are several groups supporting the proposed Responsible Parking Scotland Bill which is a private members bill that is attempting to make it illegal to park on pavements. If anyone within Inclusive Cairngorms has a comment to make on this please contact AMaL. This bill is not just about the access for disabled people and parents with young children but also the cost to councils of broken pavements. Any comments to be passed through prior to 30th June please.
37. AMaL would like to thank MC for writing to the paper regarding disabled access at Kingussie Railway Station. The letter emphasised the availability of taxis, paid for by ScotRail, to people with disabilities and the elderly for journey to the next railway station that is accessible. Most of the stations on this line are not accessible. AMaL brought up that this information was on the website but not on the booklet in each station, but they are doing a reprint and will be include this information.
38. MC also wrote to the Minister of Transport and the MSP Dave Thompson regarding the lack of accessibility. Chris Clarke from Network Rail with some colleagues are coming to Aviemore for a meeting at 11.30 on 26th June to meet with the access panel. There is

DRAFT

higher concern about Aviemore rather than Kingussie however, Network Rail say there is not a priority and they are putting in more steps. The question is how does someone with no upper body power move a step to the train? Railway staff can't assist people in a wheelchair due to health and safety. The further issue is that many taxis are not disabled accessible as MC knows herself having broken her shoulder trying to get into one. A face to face meeting will be better, as letters don't seem to do anything. MC also raised the lack of signage at train stations. We are a tourist area, locals may know that there is another access but tourists have no idea. At Aviemore if they change the platform at the last minute there is no way you can get all the way round. Strathspey Railway is also attending. Funding is allocated on the basis of footfall so that leaves the route north Aberdeenshire as non-priority as the footfall is less than the central belt.

Low Income

39. JB asked that any groups that are specifically interested in accessing the Park who are in low income groups, are they eligible for Leader Funding? EG informed the meeting that Leader funding has now run out. But it was noted that there is likely to be another funding programme in 2014.

AOCB

40. None

Date of next meeting

41. The date of the next meeting is on the **18th of September**, venue to be confirmed.

EG reported that an access panel member has requested that a future meeting could be held down towards Perth and Kinross. JB confirmed that there hasn't been a meeting in that area since this member joined and the meeting agreed that a suitable venue would be found. MC recommended a venue in Birnam that has good accessibility.

Meeting closed at 12.45pm