
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at The Richmond Memorial Hall, Tomintoul on Friday 20th March 2009 at 11.30am

PRESENT

Eric Baird
Stuart Black
Duncan Bryden
Jaci Douglas
Lucy Grant
David Green
Drew Hendry
Marcus Humphrey
Bob Kinnaird
Willie McKenna

Eleanor Mackintosh
Ian MacKintosh
Anne MacLean
Alastair MacLennan
Mary McCafferty
Fiona Murdoch
Andrew Rafferty
Gregor Rimell
Richard Stroud
Susan Walker

In Attendance:

David Cameron
Fiona Chalmers
Andrew Harper

Jane Hope
Fiona Munro
Hamish Trench

Apologies:

Peter Argyle
Geva Blackett
Dave Fallows

Welcome and Introduction

1. The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that the Board had held a Community Engagement meeting the previous evening with the focus on the work of the local tourism organisation, Glenlivet and the Cairngorms. The neighbouring tourism organisation, the ACDMO, had also been present and there had been enthusiastic discussion about the work towards creating the new Cairngorms Business Partnership (as considered by the Board on the 23rd January 2009).

Minutes of Last Meeting – Approval

2. Minutes of the last meeting on the 23rd January 2009 were approved.

Matters Arising

3. Paragraph 13b: Jane Hope reported that the work with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority on developing shared services was continuing, and there would be a paper brought to the Board for consideration at their next meeting in May.
4. Paragraph 19d: Eric Baird reported that he had attended a meeting of SMILE group (www.smile-fp7.eu) as member of advisory panel. This international project is using CNP as case study for sustainable development indicators, with Macaulay Land Use Research Institute as lead UK partner.
5. Paragraph 19b: It was noted that the Scottish Ministers had decided not to proceed with the proposal to lease out part of the Forest Estate.
6. Paragraph 11i: Fiona Murdoch pointed out that Councillors would have their terms as Councillors extended by a year in line with the change to the timing of local government elections in Scotland. It was therefore noted that this point should be fed into the Scottish Government so that it could be factored into the ongoing consideration of any changes to NPA Boards and Board Membership as a result of the Strategic Review.

Declarations of Interests

7. Willie McKenna noted an interest in Paper 6 as a director of VABS (Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey), this was noted and it was concluded he should stay for the general discussion on Community Action Planning, but withdraw from the discussions and decision on funding of the proposed project in Badenoch and Strathspey.
8. Lucy Grant declared an interest in Paper 1 as a member of Laggan Community Association but concluded this was indirect and there was no need to withdraw from the discussion.

Community Action Planning (Paper 1)

9. Andrew Harper and Fiona Munro introduced this paper which provided an update on progress in rolling out Community Action Planning throughout the Cairngorms National Park. It also sought approval to fund a three year partnership project to roll out

Community Action Planning in Badenoch and Strathspey. A key outcome in the Corporate Plan was that all communities should have Community Action Plans in place. There were a number of benefits flowing from this, namely:

- a) Identifying priorities for action and therefore a focus for resources of voluntary and public sector;
- b) Enabling a better targeting of resources;
- c) Strengthening community confidence and skills capacity;
- d) Helping with housing needs assessments;
- e) Engaging communities in a very real and practical way with the National Park Plan through local actions aimed at delivering this.

10. Community Action Planning was part of the overall strategy for engaging with communities as presented to the Board in September 2008. The CNPA had played the key roll in helping to introduce this, working through and with Community Planning Partnerships. As set out at Paragraph 9, work was in hand in each of the four local authority areas in the Park. Following completion of a pilot in the Badenoch and Strathspey area, there was now a plan for rolling this out more widely and approval was sought for that particular project as part of this paper.

11. In discussion, the following points were made:

- a) Across the whole of Scotland local authorities faced the challenge of finding effective ways of engaging with local communities. COSLA was looking for good demonstration projects, and there was the possibility that the pilot Community Action Planning Project (Our Community a Way Forward) would be put forward as a good example. While the pilot, and the proposal to roll it out across Badenoch and Strathspey, were crucially partnership projects it was noted that the CNPA had provided a lead as well as considerable amounts of funding to initiate this.
- b) The paper was welcomed. Many good lessons had been developed from the pilot, and the proposal to now roll out the project more widely was to be welcomed.
- c) It was noted at Paragraph 16 that Community Development Officers would be increasing their hours so that they could continue to support communities in Badenoch and Strathspey to develop community projects as well as taking on the role of coordinating, leading and supporting local communities in developing their action plans. The more general point was that once through the phase of developing action plans, communities generally still required some support so it was important not to forget those villages and settlements that had already been through the planning process.
- d) There were essentially two elements to the objectives of the proposed work.
 - i. The building of capacity to do things in the future;
 - ii. Demonstrating some quick wins so that people could see genuine progress.

Crucially, these projects had to lead to something sustainable, and not be totally dependent on future funding otherwise it was self defeating. The work had to plan not just for some deliverable outcomes but also the successes of those outcomes in the future. In this respect it was noted that Paragraph 11 of the Project Specification "Exit or Continuation Arrangements" needed to be more expansive. The term "Exit Strategy" was unfortunate and tended to give the wrong impression. The expression "Succession Strategy" might be nearer to

what was desired; however, it was noted this was not simply a matter of wording but it was also important to be very clear what was meant. Terminology had to be clear and accessible to everyone.

- e) Projects such as this needed to be strategic in what they delivered in the long term as well as delivering the quick wins. Quick wins were important to get a good start on the ground; people tended to be overwhelmed by the big issues and realistically these needed to be broken down into bite sized chunks. While acknowledging this, it was also noted that simultaneously it was important to take the strategic view about ensuring long term benefit to communities, and this was part of, and implicit in, clarifying the “Exit Strategy” or “Succession Strategy” as mentioned above.
- f) There was some discussion about how the area covered by these community action planning projects was defined. In the pilot, it was noted that the boundaries had been set through discussion with the communities themselves. The boundaries were what ever made sense locally, eg the pilot had used the primary school catchment area as the most sensible boundary.
- g) In relation to Paragraph 9c it was noted that Moray Council Community Planning Structures had actually been in place for a year. It was noted that the Tomintoul and Glenlivet area was somewhat on the edge of the Moray Community Planning area and tended not to be particularly well engaged with the current structures of forums and community councils. The challenge was how best to ensure the involvement of this area. There had been one meeting in the Tomintoul and Glenlivet area at which local enthusiasm for community action planning was rather mixed. There was to be a further meeting which would be attended by representatives from the pilot area which might help to develop a better understanding. Further to this, the pilot exercise had also developed the Toolkit for use by Communities.
- h) The Association of Cairngorms Communities (ACC) were not leading on the community action planning as these were essentially local exercises. However, the ACC were involved, and if actions emerged which were best done at a Park-wide level, the ACC would then have a more active role to play.
- i) It was noted that particularly in the Ballater area there was already a plethora of bodies engaged in similar types of community consultation. There was a danger of having too many all trying to do the same thing. It was hoped that the Ballater “One Voice” exercise would bring these various groupings together to some extent. What made the current community action planning different was the explicit link into the community planning which engaged all partners and therefore could lead to agreement on prioritisation of actions and hence to delivery. In other words the key difference was the fact that the mechanisms for following up with delivery were part and parcel of the process. In Ballater the current exercise was not going over old ground but was starting with all the input from what had gone before and joining this up.
- j) Aviemore had similar problems of bringing the various elements of the community together. It was scheduled for year 2 of the project; this reflected what the community had asked for and also reflected the wish to avoid confusion with all the consultation on the new school.
- k) The paper did not highlight sufficiently well that community action planning was not just about geographical communities but was also about communities of interest. It was not just about the voluntary and statutory sector but a lot of other elements of the “community” as well. In the pilot exercise the facilitators

had spent time in geographical communities talking to the communities of interest in order to see how best to involve them. The Toolkit which had emerged from the pilot was good, but it remained crucial that in taking forward further community action planning the facilitators really understood how to deal with issues surrounding disability, and in particular, knew how to handle and structure meetings in a way that ensured that people were not excluded.

- l) At Paragraph 8a of the main paper, the point was made that it was essential to ensure good feedback after meetings, otherwise people did not see any signs of follow through. The local press were particularly important in this respect.
- m) It was crucial to have good linkage between the business community and local communities. The implied separation between these two was not helpful and did not represent reality. In sparsely populated rural areas we were constantly looking for economies of scale in joining up the business community; it followed that to get these economies of scale this approach should not just stop at the business community but should link in with the local communities. The business community had skills of fund raising, project management etc which were highly applicable to the totality of community action planning roll out. It was noted that business was certainly involved in Community Action Planning; the outputs fed into the community planning partnership and the Badenoch and Strathspey Partnership was chaired by a Chamber of Commerce representative. The process was about identifying projects which were best delivered at local level, and those which were best developed and delivered at a wider level and then identifying who was best to lead. This was all about promoting civic economy in its wider sense and therefore business and local community were inextricably linked with each other.
- n) It was important to include land based rural businesses.
- o) As a point of clarification, it was noted that the report on the pilot which underpinned the community action planning roll out written by the consultants Housingplus is available from Fiona Munro if requested.
- p) The crucial point about community planning partnerships was that they brought all partners together. This was a real opportunity for the public sector to have a more joined up voice; it was also a good opportunity to ensure that the voluntary sector were kept involved at a time when the increasing difficulty of finding funding could lead to them being excluded.
- q) The approval sought for the Community Action Planning Project in Badenoch and Strathspey from 2009 – 2012 was seeking approval for years one and two which came within the current Corporate Plan; approval for the 3rd year which would be in the next Corporate Plan would have to be sought separately through the Finance Committee. The approval for that 3rd year was being sought in principle at this meeting. In that respect, there was still further work to do in seeking financial support from partners.

12. The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:

- a) **Noted the progress in developing Community Action Planning within the Cairngorms National Park on a local Park-wide basis, and congratulated all of those involved;**
- b) **Agreed to fund the Community Action Planning Project in Badenoch and Strathspey as set out in the attached expenditure justification. This agreement was to the funding for years one and two of the**

- projects; and agreement in principle to year three with agreement on the detail to be sought from the Finance Committee at a later stage;
- c) **Further thought to be given to how to better define and explain the arrangements at Paragraph 11 of the expenditure justification “Exit of Continuation Arrangements”, with more emphasis being given to the idea of “Succession Arrangements” which ensured longer term benefits.**

13. Action:

- a) **Approval for year three funding to be brought back to the Finance Committee at the appropriate time, and addressing the issue of partner funding;**
- b) **The further work on developing a more clearly articulated idea of “Succession Arrangements” for the project to be brought back to a more general discussion with the Board (timing to be confirmed) on how to ensure long term benefits of and continuation of the projects and private work initiated by the CNPA.**

Outcomes of Cairngorms National Park Land Use Group (Paper 2)

14. Hamish Trench introduced the paper which reported the outcomes of the Land Use Group established by the Board to consider opportunities resulting from recent reports to promote the Park as a focus for action on integrated rural land use; and it sought endorsement for the approach that had been identified by the group. This was certainly not about reinventing the National Park Plan, but was about taking a view at the mid-term point of the National Park Plan on what the priorities should be in this complex area. These were summarised at Paragraph 10 and set out in more detail in the attached annexes. They included:
- a) Food and drink action plan;
 - b) Woodfuel development plan;
 - c) Support and guidance for renewable energy opportunities;
 - d) Continued promotion of SRDP.
15. The Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) was a crucial element and a full review would be brought to the Board in May, following on from the Government’s reporting from their Review in April. There would be an opportunity for the Board to consider the Food and Drink Action Plan in more depth as part of the Board discussion in June. Towards the end of the year, the CNPA would consider how to start work on the next National Park Plan, and bring together the work on developing the building blocks for that.
16. In discussion the following points were made:
- a) Recent news of the withdrawal of funding by HIE from the HILFN (Highland and Islands Local Food Network) was disappointing, and might have some impact on the proposed food and drink strategy attached to the paper. Nevertheless, discussions were continuing, and given the priority being given by Government to local food and drink it was hoped there would be a solution. In any event, the

- CNPA would continue to work with HIE as a partner looking for support for our proposed work on food and drink within the Cairngorms National Park.
- b) The figures quoted in Annex 2 for the numbers of farms and crofts may not be entirely accurate for a variety of reasons. The forthcoming Economic Baseline Study would help to update this data, as would the data that had been promised by SGRPID (Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate).
 - c) Developing a strategic approach to the integration of land uses was extremely important but also extremely challenging. It had been an objective right at the start of the CNPA and so far had proved elusive. It was intellectually challenging and highly complex and it was important to start the thinking on this now in order to be able to feed in to the next National Park Plan.
 - d) Integrating land use and integrating public sector support for land use was extremely complex and may not be a final outcome in itself; there would never be a point at which it was resolved and in reality was more akin to an ongoing conversation. However, it remained important for the CNPA to take this work forward, but in recognition that there was never a finishing point.
 - e) Further to the point made above, it was suggested that a competitive system such as provided by the SRDP could not be relied on to provide the incentives for delivering the outcomes desired in the National Park. Incentive schemes such as the ESA Scheme had been very good at influencing land use to deliver environmental benefits. A scheme dedicated to the National Park was needed and this idea should be pursued with the Scottish Government. The funding could clearly not come out of the CNPA budget; but National Park status recognised the special nature of the area, and to deliver this a scheme was needed which was not competitive. This approach to the Scottish Government should be delivered in cooperation with the other Scottish National Park.
 - f) Clear evidence was now available that the SRDP was not delivering what was wanted in the Cairngorms National Park, strengthening the arguments for a dedicated scheme within the National Park. The associated question was how best to deploy the CNPA limited funds. The CNPA had already fed comments into the Governments Review on SRDP but the intention was to make a separate approach to the Scottish Government once they had concluded their report.
 - g) On the food and drink strategy there was the choice between going “wide and shallow” and going “narrow and deep”. The HIE response appeared to be going narrow and deep by focusing on businesses with high growth potential. By contrast the approach set out in the proposed food and drink strategy appeared to be wide and shallow, as indicated at Paragraphs 2 and 5c. These two approaches appeared to be in tension with each other. On the one hand prioritisation was needed in order to achieve some real effects which created economic wealth; on the other hand the approach in the strategy appeared to be focusing on wide ranging provision of support and guidance. With very limited resources it was important to be clear what we were trying to achieve. Further advice was sought from the Board (there would be scope for this at the Board discussion in June) meanwhile the Action Plan attached to the Food and Drink Strategy in the paper set out a whole range of actions currently under way through a large range of different players. The Park Authority with its limited capacity had to concentrate on how best to influence these activities and corral what partners were already doing in order to achieve some synergies.
 - h) There was some discussion about the role of allotments in terms of opportunities for business as well as opportunities for individual members of the

community (2.4 in the table). It was noted that wherever there was enthusiasm it was right to tap into this. The real opportunity was in tying several activities together in order to maximise the benefit.

- i) The suggestion was made that in any SWOT analysis (Paragraph 9 in the Annex) European legislation should be identified as a potential threat.
- j) Implicit in the food and drink strategy was that dedicated individuals were needed to make things happen, and this essentially meant adding value to the existing food product.
- k) Woodfuel had not really been taken up within Scotland as much as had been hoped largely due to the expense of boilers which came from mainland Europe, and therefore were affected by currency movements. An important related point was that native Scots Pine took over a hundred years to mature while an economic return could be generated on a non-native species such as spruce within forty years. Local generation of woodfuel would have to go hand in hand with an acceptance that some non-native species would need to be involved.
- l) Food and drink strategy should not overlook the simple elements such as a register of where one could get local food. Highland Opportunities Limited was taking over the delivery of the Business Gateway Function from Highland Council and this might provide opportunities for supporting some of these simple initiatives.
- m) The Housing Associations were putting money into alternative energy provision and this provided an important vehicle for helping to promote support and guidance for renewable energy opportunities.

17. In summing up the Convener complimented the extremely good paper. Taking forward the thinking on integrated land use was vital but was an extremely complex task which needed to be started now. There was general agreement that a land management scheme for the National Park was required, and this would be considered further in the paper taken to the Board in May. The paper on the proposed food and drink strategy was welcomed; there would be a further discussion on the 12th June on how to best focus our effort and that of partners.

18. **The Board agreed the recommendations of the papers as follows:**

- a) **That the CNPA help to stimulate action in the short-term but develops market options and sustains economic activity in the land based sector – with immediate priorities being food and drink, timber and renewable energy;**
- b) **That the CNPA address wider challenges of the integration of land uses to inform development of the next National Park Plan;**
- c) **That the CNPA continue to respond to changing circumstances and opportunities in order to support the economic viability of land based businesses and their capacity to deliver public benefits.**

19. **Action:**

- a) **Hamish Trench to bring paper to Board in May on SRDP;**
- b) **Chris Bremner to lead informal discussion by the board in June on food and drink strategy.**

Clim-ATIC Project (Paper 3)

20. Fiona Chalmers introduced the paper which sought the Board's approval to make financial contributions to the Clim-ATIC Project in 2008/09, 09/10 and 10/11. This was a complex project funded by the Northern Peripheries Programme. The CNPA involvement went back several years and had been mentioned to the Board on several previous occasions. A major theme of the programme was the adaptation to climate change in communities, bringing together communities, the public sector, and the academic sector to find practical applications and demonstration projects to test ideas. The programme was led by UHI. The challenge for the CNPA had been to find how it could best link the priorities of the programme with those in the National Park Plan. Three community based adaptation demonstration projects had been developed:
- a) Electric Vehicle pilot project, Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport Company;
 - b) Cairngorms Woodfuel Promotion and Awareness Project (part of the Woodfuel Action Plan);
 - c) "Stay and Play" – a sustainable tourism project seeking alternative activities to the winter sports market.
21. In addition to these demonstration projects there would be the development of a community adaptation strategy by young people across the Park area using film as a medium with a particular focus on themes of transport, energy and tourism. The Cairngorms National Park Authority would play a key role in the coordination of project activities. Staff were currently engaged in the development of these projects and their time would count as a contribution in kind and so be able to lever more funds from the Northern Periphery Programme. The coalescing of the objectives of the programme with those in the National Park Plan had taken some time and had only recently come together; hence the seeking of the Board's approval to contribute sums as detailed to the project.
22. In discussion the following points were made:
- a) The Woodfuel Awareness and Promotion Project had developed from a workshop held at Alvie Estate. The main message to emerge was the need for further training, and a two year programme of training events was therefore being developed working with Highland Birchwoods. The work would also address some of the issues around accreditation within the building industry.
 - b) The tourism initiative was being developed with the Aviemore and Cairngorms DMO. It employed Bluetooth technology and had developed in conjunction with the skiing industry on Cairngorm Mountain, the idea being that if skiing was not possible, other businesses with alternative activities could provide information on those alternatives to mobile phones.
 - c) It was very satisfying to see that this project was linking with other work by the CNPA, notable the work with young people using film as a medium to look at issues within the National Park.
 - d) It was noted that the information box at the top of page 6 had a word "not" missing; the relevant line should have read: "thus there are risks if such persons cannot dedicate sufficient time to the project".
 - e) The attraction of these projects under the Clim-ATIC Project banner was that staff time was not additional to what the CNPA were intending but was time that was being spent anyway on delivery of the National Park Plan and that time allowed the CNPA to draw down additional resources. It was therefore a very good example of maximising our leverage of funding by seeking synergies

between activities in the National Park Plan and other projects out with the CNPA.

- f) The Woodfuel Project if successful would lead to an increase in uptake of timber for fuel. A separate but related piece of work, the Woodfuel Action Plan, was dealing with the supply side question. The project on promoting awareness was therefore moving in parallel with the Woodfuel Action Plan and to an extent, this was a reflection of the funding opportunities that were available. It was noted that a significant increase in use of timber would require some significant impact on infrastructure which is generally not in place for extraction of timber. The Woodfuel Action Plan Steering Group had representatives of Scottish Enterprise, the Local Authorities, and the Forestry Commission; further this was likely to become a big issue for the Scottish Government which would raise issues of infrastructure up the National Agenda.

23. The Convener summed up the discussion by commending the work on this project as being innovative, making good links with work in other areas such as that with young people and maximising the leverage of sources of funding. It helped to deliver many of the outcomes in the National Park Plan.

24. **The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:**

- a) **Approved the contributions to the 2008/09 Operational Plan (The Finance Committee had already considered the application for funding and had given its approval.):**
 - i. **£20,000 contribution to the overall project**
 - ii. **£10,000 contribution to the Woodfuel Demonstration Project**
- b) **Approved a £20,000 per year contribution to the overall project for 2009/10 and 2010/11 subject to Board approval of the Operational Plan for each of these years.**

Operational Plan for 2009/10 (Paper 4)

25. Jane Hope and David Cameron introduced the paper which sought the Board's approval to the proposed operational plan for 2009/10. The paper also drew the Board's attention to the particular challenges facing the CNPA in the delivery of this Plan. The detail of the Plan had been considered earlier by the Finance Committee; the paper before the Board therefore set out only a broad outline of the Plan in the annexes and the main deliverables. Paragraphs 15 onwards were particularly important in setting out the challenges facing the CNPA in the delivery of the Plan. These were threefold:

- a) The increasing difficulty of getting partnership funding for projects. The staff would need to think more innovatively about dealing with this, and in doing so should make more use of the Finance Committee in helping to find creative and new approaches.
- b) A crucial role for staff was the coordination of activity across partners and across the Park and seeking the synergies between the work of different partners. This work tended to be somewhat invisible in the Plan but was nevertheless crucial to the CNPA delivering its key role.
- c) The need to continually be more effective at engaging with partners, developing a real understanding of partnership.

26. These were all the inevitable challenges of being an enabling organisation, and would become more acute as public sector funding became scarcer. Board Working Groups and Board Discussion Groups should be increasingly used during the year to tackle some of these issues.

27. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) The Finance Committee had approved the Plan earlier that day. The Committee was satisfied with the process of putting the Plan together and satisfied that the Plan allowed for priorities to be recognised as exactly that. The Committee acknowledged the big problem being the increasing scarcity of partnership funding and would be playing its part during the year in helping staff to deal with this.
- b) The explicit links to the Scottish Government Outcomes at Annex 2 were useful.
- c) The proposed Strategy Group to be chaired at Ministerial level (one of the recommendations of the Strategic Review) was an opportunity to ensure the buy-in of partners.
- d) There was already considerable engagement of staff at all levels with partners. It was essential to ensure that the timing was right and the level of engagement was right so that this linked with partner's financial planning exercises. This engagement was already happening, and we were already ensuring Park Plan actions were encapsulated in the Community Planning Single Outcome Agreements. Nevertheless, there was still scope for this engagement to be improved.
- e) Securing funding was increasingly competitive. The CNPA needed to make itself more high profile and more attractive, rather than being prepared to work in the background. The tension was that in striving to work with and through partners, it had always been important that the CNPA was not blowing its own trumpet but was giving partners credit, with the inevitable loss of visibility of the CNPA's actions. This was therefore a delicate balancing act.
- f) There might be scope to hook into what outside organisations were already doing; in other words it was important for the CNPA to look outside the "Cairngorms bubble".
- g) It was right to try and be more innovative and to take more risks. The corollary was that the Board would have to accept there may be more "mistakes" and it would be important to develop the right culture to support such an innovative approach.
- h) In developing the shared services approach with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs it would be essential to ensure good HR support if we were going to be innovative.
- i) The findings of the Strategic Review and the expected Government announcement on the conclusion to that in the Spring might provide an opportune moment for reaffirming the partnership working with partners.
- j) The Operational Plan incorporated 20% of over programming which provided the ability to take a flexible approach to the opportunities as they came up during the year. It also recognised that some projects might fail to move forward precisely because of lack of partnership funding.

28. **The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:**

- a) **Approved the proposed Operational Plan for 2009/10;**

- b) **Noted the particular challenges highlighted at Paragraphs 13 to 16 and the proposed approach to these in the coming year.**

29. Action:

- a) **Paper to the Board in May on shared services with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs;**
- b) **Discussion sessions and working groups during the year to be focused increasingly on finding innovative solutions to the issues identified in the paper.**

Committee Membership (Paper 5)

30. The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:

- a) **Approved Richard Stroud as a Member of the Finance Committee;**
- b) **Ratified Bob Kinnaird as a Member of the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum.**

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31. A number of brief items were reported as follows:

- a) The Convener noted for information a number of meetings he had taken part in recently; the UK ANPA meeting in January in London; the meeting with local MSP Alex Johnstone who retained a close interest in the Cairngorms National Park. He had also written to the new Minister and looked forward to meeting her in due course.
- b) Eric Baird and Duncan Bryden had both attended the joint meeting of the Grampian Forestry Forum and the Highlands Forestry Forum.
- c) Jaci Douglas had attended the Ward Forum in Badenoch and Strathspey, as well as the Community Needs Initiative Seminar in Boat of Garten. Andrew Rafferty had also attended the Badenoch and Strathspey Ward Forum.
- d) Marcus Humphrey had attended a meeting in Braemar on the future of St Margaret's Episcopal Church a grade A listed building. This had been convened by the Prince's Regeneration Trust and had looked at future uses for this church.

Date of Next Meeting

32. Friday 15th May at the Community Hall, Boat of Garten.