
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING **held in the Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey** **on Friday 24 June 2016 at 10.30am**

PRESENT

Peter Argyle (Convener)
Rebecca Badger
Paul Easto
Katrina Farquhar
Kate Howie
Janet Hunter
Gregor Hutcheon

John Latham
Bill Lobban
Eleanor Mackintosh
Fiona Murdoch
Judith Webb
Brian Wood (Deputy Convener)

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive,
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services,
Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development,
Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience,
Will Boyd Wallis, Head of Land Management & Conservation,
Peter Crane, Head of Visitor Services,
Penny Lawson, Land Management Adviser,
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board.

Apologies:

Angela Douglas	Dave Fallows
Jeanette Gaul	Willie McKenna
Gordon Riddler	Gregor Rimell

Welcome and Introduction

- I. Peter Argyle, the Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Grantown-on-Spey. He advised that the Board were anxious about what the future would hold given the results of the European Referendum. He went on to provide the following news:
 - The Speyside Way Extension project had been shortlisted for a Scottish Award for Quality in Planning.
 - He advised that he, Brian Wood and Paul Easto had attended the Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP) conference at Mar Lodge the day before the meeting

and had heard an interesting series of presentations. He gave a rundown of who the speakers were and what their topics of presentation entailed.

2. Apologies were received from the above Members.

Minutes of Last Meeting held on 11 March, 2016 – for approval

3. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 March 2016 were agreed with the following amendment:
 - At Para 21b): The addition of the words '*and beyond*' to the last sentence.
4. The draft Confidential Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 March 2016 were agreed with no amendments.

Matters Arising

5. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the minutes of the meeting on 11 March 2016:
 - Action Point at Para. 13(i.) – Closed – Pre-election guidance circulated to the Board 24 March 2016.
 - Action Point at Para. 18(i.) – Closed – David Cameron circulated to the Board the previous years' figures in respect of the Core Budget Estimates.
 - Action Point at Para. 22(i.) – In hand – Updates to the Board on the Forums included twice a year in June and December, included in June Agenda.
 - Action Point at Para. 22(ii.) – Closed – The Board added to the circulation list for the farmers' regular e-bulletins.
 - Action Point at Para. 22(iii.) – Closed – Paper on the successes of the Land Management Training on today's Agenda as Paper 2.
 - Action Point at Para. 22(iv.) – Pending – Future key dates for the Land Management Training event still to be encompassed into the Board Forward Look and circulated to the Board.
 - Action Point at Para. 22(v.) – Closed – Wording in paper changed.
 - Action Point at Para. 26(i.) – Closed – Organisations alerted by Murray Ferguson and staff names in Paper on web redacted.
6. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the minutes of the confidential meeting on 11 March 2016:
 - Action Point at Para 3 (i.) – Closed – all points actioned in refining consultation text; communications plan discussed by the Board on 13th May 2016.

Declarations of Interest

7. Brian Wood declared an interest in:
 - Item No. Paper 5 - Indirect interest – Is a member of Cairngorms Local Action Group (CLAG) board.

CEO Report (Paper 1)

8. Grant Moir Chief Executive introduced Paper 1 which highlights the main strategic work streams that are being directed by Management Team. Grant explained that these are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver National Park Partnership Plan priorities. He highlighted the following areas:
 - The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) Consultation will be launched on Monday 27th June. Hard copies would be sent to Community Councils, constituency Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament. Electronic links to the document would be sent to Partners. The Issue reports associated with the 9 Big Questions will be available on the website. A full programme of events is still under development however this Tuesday the Cairngorms Nature Seminar is taking place in the Lonach Hall, Strathdon.
 - He and the Convener had written to the Local Authorities in the Cairngorms National Park and to date meetings had been set up with Marr Area Committee of Aberdeenshire Council and Perth & Kinross Council.
 - He asked Board Members to encourage people to engage in the consultation and to encourage people to respond.
 - He provided an update on the statistics detailed in the paper in respect of the Cairngorms Nature Campaign. He advised that 1650 people had attended this year which was a 92% increase on last year's figures.
 - He advised that Murray Ferguson and Gavin Miles had started to take things forward in preparation for the proposed review of planning arrangements in the Cairngorms.
9. The Board considered the detail of the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Resounding praise for the presentation of the National Park Partnership Plan Consultation document.
 - b) Question was raised regarding whether the National Park had submitted any views on the reorganisation of the National Trust for Scotland; given that Mar Lodge was an important asset to the area. Grant advised that how the National Trust for Scotland structures themselves is not an issue on which the CNPA

would comment. He advised that David Frew was still the Property Manager for Mar Lodge Estate and that the CNPA had close ties with him and the senior management at the National Trust for Scotland.

- c) Would Board members be equipped with a PowerPoint presentation on the National Park Partnership Plan Consultation to present at Community Council meetings? Grant advised that they would, and of a letter being sent out to Community Councils offering a board member to attend a meeting and present. Had it been decided who from the Board would be an observer on VisitAberdeenshire? Grant advised that this would be decided as part of the Board Membership of Groups paper at the Board meeting on 30th September 2016.
- d) Could the loss of funding to the peatland action be outlined? Grant advised that Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) had received two years of funding from the Scottish Government which had part paid for our peatland officer and for work on the ground. He advised that this funding had come to an end. He explained that the CNPA Peatland Officer and others around the UK were currently working up an EU LIFE Bid to enable peatland work to continue, although this bid was now subject to threat given the EU referendum result.
- e) A Board Member advised that they had recently attended a peatland presentation run by Scottish Land and Estates where there was a clear push for Estates to seek corporate funding for this type of work.
- f) Could using peatland restoration for flood management be another avenue for attracting funding? Grant advised that it could and that we would need to involve multiple partners including Scottish Water, SEPA, FCS, landowners etc.
- g) The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, do businesses benefit from having that status? Grant advised that the accreditation is important for the Park as a destination but that at present it does not resonate with the businesses as a marketing tool. Grant advised that it was more important that businesses make a strong connection to the National Park and that several lines of work, such as the 'Make It Yours' campaign that promotes the benefits of the National Park to front line staff in tourism organisations, are under way to support this.
- h) An issue was raised with Historic Environment Scotland potential inability to fund part of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid for built heritage as a result of the Crown Estate being devolved. Grant agreed to keep a close eye on the situation and advised that the risk is detailed in the Corporate Risk Register.

10. The Board noted the Paper.

11. Actions: None.

Review of CNPA Land Management Training (Paper 2)

12. Will Boyd Wallis, Head of Land Management and Conservation introduced Paper 2 which provides a review and update on CNPA's training and communications support for land managers and asks the Board to consider the future direction of this support. Will thanked Penny Lawson for her work on it to date.
13. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Are the training recipients asked to complete a feedback form following completion of the training? Could a question around their thoughts on the National Park be incorporated? Will confirmed that feedback forms are used and agreed that a question could be added and welcomed help from the Board on the wording of the question.
 - b) In reference to paragraph 20 of the Paper had the Scots Language Centre based in Perth been approached for help with the courses? Penny advised many different individuals and organisations had contributed but was uncertain whether any had an affiliation to the Scots Language Centre and agreed to chat to Kate Howie about it after the meeting.
 - c) Clarification as to whether or not the project had helped to fund statutory training. Will reported that in 2014-15 they had however from 2015-16 they had specifically not included 'First Aid' training because this is something all businesses are required to offer, but some other training land based businesses are legally obliged to undertake are still funded.
 - d) A suggestion was made to have an annual deadline for applications so that applications can be decided upon one against the other to avoid worthy applicants missing out of funding as a result of funding having ceased. It was reported that the training programme works well as it stands and has significant buy-in from land management businesses.
 - e) Thanks to Will Boyd Wallis, Penny Lawson and team for providing a great service.
 - f) Had time and effort been spent training trainers? Will advised that this had been discussed however realistically the businesses taking part in the training programme are generally not big enough to justify having their own trainer, hence the CNPA scheme.
 - g) Agreement that the flexibility of not having a set deadline date for rounds of applications helps to ensure when a course comes up an applicant can apply for funding to enable them to attend the course. How could funding be held back to ensure even spread throughout the year? Will advised that there was a limit for each Estate, previously set at £2,000 but now at £1,000.

- h) At the CBP Conference a gap in helping to train people to go into the tourism industry as well as a shortage of Chefs was reported – could the National Park help with that? Grant advised that we had to prioritise funding and resources and that there were other avenues through which tourism businesses can gain access to training. Murray added that some of the land management training would provide of benefits for tourism businesses but that tourism skills had been identified as a national issue. There were opportunities for partners to pick those elements relating to the Cairngorms in the next Tourism Action Plan. At present the key ongoing initiatives that would benefit the tourism industry were the CNPA’s ‘Make it Yours’ campaign and the digital workshops being led by the Cairngorms Business Partnership
- i) The Convener highlighted the upcoming Wildlife Crime Stakeholder Seminar to the Board and suggested that some may be interested in attending. Will agreed to keep the Board updated on developments in this regard.

14. The Board acknowledged the value of continuing to provide training support to the land management sector and the role it plays alongside other support provision.

15. Actions:

- i. Help with wording a question to be added to the training recipients feedback form.**
- ii. Kate Howie to discuss with Penny Lawson how to contact the Scots Language Centre for support in running Scots/ Doric/ Gaelic training courses.**
- iii. Will Boyd Wallis to keep the Board abreast with developments surrounding the Wildlife Crime Stakeholder Seminar scheduled to take place in October 2016.**

16. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 3 presented an update on the Authority’s performance to the end of the 2015/16 financial and operational year, the end of the first year of the current Corporate Plan and the second last year of the current five-year Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan. He added that the paper also presents any particular successes achieved over the course of the last 6 months, while highlighting by exception any significant constraints or shortcomings on planned delivery. He apologised for the omission of the Strategic Risk Register from the pack of papers and advised that he would circulate it (this afternoon) following the meeting. He provided the Board with an update on the financial position; he reported a net surplus outturn position of £60,000 which was more than anticipated although still only just over a 1% variance from the target break

even and well within the agreed outturn range adopted in the key performance indicators.

17. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) The reason for incomplete data related to volunteer days in page 3 of Annex 2 of the paper was discussed. Pete Crane advised that it was as a result of Partners collecting data at different times of the year and an unusual spike in numbers last year attributable to one ranger service.
 - b) Had the Mountain Paths work on Beinn a'Ghlo been delayed? Pete confirmed that it was scheduled to take place in 2017.
 - c) In reference to page 7 of Annex 1 of the Paper, a question was asked about the continuance of stakeholder relations when a member of staff leaves? David advised that relations are maintained through the wider staff group and ensuring there is some reasonable cross-over in managing stakeholder relationships between more than one member of staff. When someone does leave, the Authority does move quickly (into recruitment following staff departures,) where replacement is deemed to be appropriate, to avoid lengthy (which results in the Authority not sitting for a long time with) vacancies or significant gaps in its work with stakeholders.
 - d) With reference to Paper 3 Annex 2, do estates find it worthwhile taking part in the Wildlife Estates Initiative? Hamish advised that the uptake had not been as high as it was hoped. He reported that there were some estates that were still going through the application process. . He added that the process had not delivered quite what was hoped yet but it has helped bring some estates together and we will continue to look for opportunities. It was noted that 85% of the land area is within the Initiative, while recognised that the specific target for (indicator which looks at) the number of estates taking part was not being met at present.
 - e) Praise for a clear and informative report.
18. **The Board reviewed the update on corporate performance and strategic risk management set out in this paper.**
19. **Action:**
- i. **David Cameron to circulate the Strategic Risk Register to the Board as soon as possible following the meeting.**

Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy (Paper 4)

20. Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience introduced Paper 4 which asked the Board to discuss the consultation responses for the Cairngorm and Glenmore Strategy and the direction for completion of the strategy.
21. Grant reported that he, Pete Crane and Gavin Miles had met with Ewan Kearney of Natural Retreats and good and robust conversations had taken place. Grant also reported that a meeting had taken place with the Environment NGO's about the proposals recently and again a good discussion had taken place.
22. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Comment made that the project in Glenmore specifically was progressing really well however there is concern with Natural Retreats.
 - b) Was Keith Legge involved in the improving facilities work? Hamish advised the Scottish Youth Hostels Association and Highlife Highland were looking at rejuvenating the youth hostel site at Glenmore. He advised that they had recently completed a feasibility study into options for (to see the options for what was possible in) combining youth and outdoor learning functions.
 - c) Discussion around the role of Highlands & Islands Enterprise as landlord at Cairngorm Mountain.
 - d) A query as why not much emphasis had been put on the caravan and campsite at Glenmore? Hamish agreed that it should feature more prominently than it does. However they were working on the basis that it would remain as a campsite and had met with Camping in the Forest who run the facility.
 - e) The Board agreed that one of the main challenges ahead was public transport and any changes to car parking.
 - f) The Convener said that he was looking forward to seeing the completed strategy at the next Board meeting on 30th September 2016.
23. **The Board noted the paper.**
24. **Actions: None.**

Update on Cairngorms LEADER Programme and Cairngorms Trust (Paper 5)

25. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 5 which presents an update on the development and delivery of the Cairngorms LEADER programme,

in the context of wider national development of the LEADER programme structure. He reported that since the drafting of the Paper the Scottish Government have provided the Cairngorms Local Action Group (CLAG) with the letter of offer template and subsequently the letters have begun to be sent out to the first round of successful applicants. He added that the next CLAG meeting is scheduled for August 2016.

26. David added that the paper also presents an update on the establishment of a charitable organisation by the Cairngorms Local Action Group. CLAG members are now directors of charitable trust. He advised that the Cairngorms Charitable Trust had already been of benefit to delivery within the National Park through providing a community asset lock mechanism for delivery of broadband for the area.
27. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) A very good and helpful paper and mindful of the difficulties and risks associated that would need to be kept a close eye upon.
 - b) Was there an opportunity for a Board member to join the Cairngorms Charitable Trust? David advised that Brian Wood has automatically become the Board representative on the Cairngorms Charitable Trust through Brian's nomination by the Board to the CLAG. He added that papers on the Cairngorms Charitable Trust would continue to be brought to the Finance & Delivery Committee.
 - c) Comment that it was great to see the Cairngorms Charitable Trust having come to fruition and that a letter from the Convener would be sent to David Green (former Board Convener who had the original idea for the Trust) to advise him of the good news.
 - d) A number of members raised the need to be clear in our structures and also in presentation to the public that there was a clear independence of the CLAG and LEADER decision-making from the Authority. Brian Wood advised that the Cairngorms LAG are very conscious of the separation between the CNPA and the CLAG and as a result the LAG are very careful when it comes to the declaration of interests for example. David also highlighted that internal structures had been designed with this separation and independence in mind, through David's own lead on CLAG and LEADER matters separating that management from the delivery oriented aspects of the Authority's structures led by Hamish and Murray.
28. **The Board noted the paper and considered how the Board might wish to work in partnership with the Cairngorms Trust and or seek to make use of**

the existence of the charity in delivery of National Park Partnership Plan priorities.

29. **Actions: None.**

Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership – Submission of Stage 2 Bid to Heritage Lottery Fund (Paper 6)

30. Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience introduced Paper 6 which updates the Board on the submission of the Stage 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership. He highlighted the successful partnership that had been created. He gave special thanks to Marion MacDonald who had done a fantastic job and would be moving onto a new job at the start of July 2016, but leaves the partnership in good standing for next part.
31. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) Resounding gratitude to Marion MacDonald and the staff for the work they had put in over the development phase to date.
 - b) Had there been any progress made with Crown Estate with regards to the path to the scenic routes installation? Hamish advised that the Crown Estate were still not keen on creating a path and that discussions were ongoing.
32. **The Board noted:**
- a) **the submission of the Stage 2 bid to Heritage Lottery Fund and the plans in place for delivery; and**
 - b) **the significant commitment from community members and partner organisations over the development phase to date.**
33. **Actions: None.**

National Parks UK (Oral Update)

34. The Convener presented an update on National Parks UK Executive Annual General Meeting that had taken place last week. He made the following points:
- Professor Jackie Burgess, Chair of Broads National Park Authority was elected as the new Chair of NPUK.
 - It was agreed that Peter Argyle continue as Vice-Chair of organisation.
 - There will be a conference in August 2017 in the South Downs NP.

- David Cameron has been nominated as the contact point for Scotland with regard to a new initiative about shared services between National Park Authorities.
- National Parks Partnership Ltd had reported positively on sponsorship discussions that are currently taking place with 50 companies. Discussion had taken place about the data needed to support the work of the organisation. Since the meeting very positive feedback had been received from Naomi Conway, Director of National Parks Partnership Limited on the quality of data held in the Cairngorms which she described as the gold standard that other Parks should strive to emulate to give consistent and comparable data.
- It was agreed that the UK National Park Attitudes Survey should take place this year and once again in 2020.
- It was noted that the UK Parliamentary Cross Party Group has no Scottish Members of Parliament (MP's) on it and the Convener suggested that Board Members encourage any MPs with whom members have contact to take part in this Group.

AOCB

35. The Convener advised that he had received several expressions of interest from Board members to attend the EUROPARC Conference in October 2016. He announced that Board Members, Janet Hunter and Katrina Farquhar would attend the Conference on behalf of the Board.
36. The Convener advised that the Standards Commission had updated their guidance on declaration of interests. David Cameron agreed he would bring a paper outlining the changes to the Audit & Risk Committee in the first instance before coming to full Board.
37. Grant informed the Board that he would be on annual leave from Friday 2nd July 2016 for two weeks and that Murray Ferguson and David Cameron would be around during this time.
38. Grant advised that the Board would be kept up to date on relevant issues coming out of the European Referendum as they became clearer in the coming weeks and months.
39. The Planning Committee Convener, Eleanor Mackintosh thanked the Board for having confirmed their availability for the Planning Committee meeting on 8th July 2016 and requested that Members notify the Clerk to the Board as soon as possible if they felt they could no longer attend.

Date of Next Meeting

40. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 30 September 2016, The Lonach Hall, Strathdon.
41. The Public part of this meeting concluded at 12.25 hours.