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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## APPROVED MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held in the Community Hall, Boat of Garten on Friday 25 September 2015 at 10am

### PRESENT

Peter Argyle (Convener)	John Latham
Rebecca Badger	Eleanor Mackintosh
Angela Douglas	Willie McKenna
Paul Easto	Fiona Murdoch
Dave Fallows	Gordon Riddler
Katrina Farquhar	Gregor Rimell
Rebecca Badger	Judith Webb
Kate Howie	Brian Wood (Deputy Convener)
Janet Hunter	

### 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 Services,  
Francoise Van Buuren, Head of Communications & Engagement,  
Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services,  
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board.

**Apologies:**           Jeanette Gaul           Gregor Hutcheon

### Welcome and Introduction

1. Peter Argyle, the Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Boat of Garten with a special welcome to Janet Hunter.
2. The Convener said that a positive discussion with Catharine Idle, Paths for All Partnership, Dan Jenkins, NHS Highland and Helen Todd, Ramblers Scotland on Active Cairngorms had taken place the previous evening.

3. Apologies were received from the above Members.

### **Minutes of Last Meeting held on 26 June, 2015 – for approval**

4. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 June 2015 were agreed with no amendments.

### **Matters Arising**

5. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the previous meeting:
  - Action Point at Para 14 (i) – Peter Argyle had taken the position of Board Convener on 8th September.
  - Action Point at Para 19 (i) – Paper outlining the VAT issue within the Tomintoul and Glenlivet project was brought to the Finance & Delivery Committee on 14 August 2015.
  - Action Point at Para 19 (ii) – The Board visit to a peatland restoration site had still to be arranged but hoped to take place in October/ November this year. Funding had recently been secured for the new phase.
  - Action Point at Para 19 (iii) – Update on the progress and next steps of the Moorland Partnership was circulated to the Board on 22 July 2015.
  - Action Point at Para 19 (iv) – Board membership on groups on today's Agenda.
  - Action point at Para 23 (i) – Activity Providers Group of Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP) had been approached to identify a suitable representative(s) from the business community to sit on the Partnership.
  - Action Point at Para 23 (ii) – Board membership on groups on today's Agenda.
  - Action point at Para 29 (i) – Partners have been invited to all 4 board business sessions this autumn to give Board members the opportunity to engage directly with Partners as part of National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) development.
  - Action Point at Para 33 (i) – The new monitoring format to come before the Board at their December meeting to include the direction of travel of each outcome and a commentary that flags up the context of the target, where appropriate.

### **Declarations of Interest**

7. There were no interests declared.

### **CEO Report (Paper I)**

9. Grant Moir, Chief Executive, introduced Paper I 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:

- Further leverage of funding has been confirmed to the peatland restoration project and Active Cairngorms.
- Over £14 million in partnership funding had been levered into the National Park in the last year by the Authority and its partners, highlighting the effectiveness in utilisation of a relatively small grant in aid allocation from Scottish Government.
- The UK Spending Review will be announced at the end of November. The Scottish Government Spending Review will follow this. Therefore it is unlikely that we will be in a position to take the draft budget to the December Board meeting. The draft budget will be taken to the Finance & Delivery Committee early in 2016 and to the Board in March 2016.

10. The Board discussed the following:

- A query as to what scale 4,300 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per annum equates to. Grant advised that this would be circulated to the board.
- The Finance & Delivery Committee Convener asked in light of the spending review timings, that the date of the Finance & Delivery Committee in early January be kept flexible. David agreed that the meeting could be brought forward from 29 January 2016 if necessary.
- In relation to the UK National Parks Tourism Officers visit in early October, would the Board be invited to be involved? Grant advised that the Board could attend if they wished, that it was taking place on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and that he would circulate information on the event to the Board.
- Had business representation on the Cairngorms Local Action Group been found? The Convener advised that they had been supplemented with Ben Addy, Director of Moxon Architects based in Aberdeenshire and London, and Ray Morris of Kingussie.

11. Dave Fallows joined the meeting at this point.

12. **The Board noted the Paper.**

13. **Actions:**

- Circulate to Board information on the scale of CO2 equivalence.**
- Details of the UK National Parks Tourism Officers visit on 7<sup>th</sup>/ 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015 to be circulated to the Board when available.**

## **Adoption of Planning Guidance to Support the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (2015) (Paper 2)**

14. Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development, introduced Paper 2 which asks the Board to adopt three items of Supplementary Guidance and seven items on non-statutory planning guidance on policy topics in the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (2015).

15. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- If the Planning Committee were to refuse a planning application on the grounds of non-statutory planning guidance and the planning application then went on to appeal how much weighting would be given to the non-statutory planning guidance? Murray advised that in policy terms the non-statutory planning guidance and Supplementary Guidance would effectively be of the same status and the Department for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) would presumably take the same approach.
- Concern surrounding the affordable housing contribution in Policy 11 (Developer Contributions) and the differing levels of contributions being sought depending on three or four houses being built. The Convenor advised that the Board would have opportunity to discuss this detail during the upcoming Board sessions on the new National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP).

16. **The Board agreed to**

**a) Adopt the following Supplementary Guidance:**

- **Policy 4: Natural Heritage**
- **Policy 7: Renewable Energy**
- **Policy 11: Developer Contributions**

**b) Adopt the following non-statutory planning guidance:**

- **Policy 1: Housing Development**
- **Policy 2: Supporting Economic Growth**
- **Policy 3: Sustainable Design**
- **Policy 5: Landscape**
- **Policy 8: Sport and Recreation**
- **Policy 9: Cultural Heritage**
- **Policy 10: Resources**

17. **Action:                   None.**

## **Board Member Committee / Group Membership (Paper 3)**

18. Grant Moir introduced Paper 3 which asks the Board to agree the Board Membership of Committees and Groups for the next year.
19. The Board considered the current membership of the Groups and Committees and agreed the following: (Changes agreed noted as CI etc.)
- No change to the Finance & Delivery Committee as stated in the Paper.
  - With regards to the Audit Committee, Brian Wood had been replaced by Dave Fallows quite some time ago; this oversight in the Paper was highlighted. Gregor Hutcheon had asked to come off this Committee and it was agreed that Becky Badger would take up the position (CI).
  - No change to the Staffing & Recruitment Committee as stated in the Paper.
  - No change to the Planning Committee as stated in the Paper.
  - The Communications group and Brand group would merge and be chaired by Brian Wood. Paul Easto, Janet Hunter and Dave Fallows would join this merged grouping (C2).
  - No change to the Conveners Group.
  - No change to the Board representation on the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT).
  - It was agreed that Judith Webb take up the position of Board representative on the Cairngorms Nature Strategy group and that John Latham become the substitute (C3).
  - It was agreed that Becky Badger take up the position of Board representative on the Active Cairngorms Delivery Partnership and that Gregor Hutcheon become the substitute (C4).
  - No change to the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership.
  - Willie McKenna to attend the Cairngorm & Glenmore Partnership (C5).
  - No change to representation on the Cairngorm LEADER Action Group, the Highland Community Planning Partnership, National Parks UK, Farmers Forum and the Transform Team Glenlivet and Tomintoul.
  - Gregor Rimell is to replace Gordon Riddler on Inclusive Cairngorms (C6).
  - Judith Webb to replace Gordon Riddler on the Cairngorms Deer Action Group (CDAG) (C7).
  - No change to the representatives on the Association of Cairngorms Communities and on the Developers Forum.
  - Fiona Murdoch to replace Gordon Riddler on the Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF) (C8).
  - No change to the representatives on the Cairngorms, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Group (CRAGG) and on the Land Management Forum.
  - Gordon Riddler to represent the Board on the Cairngorms Economic Forum (C9).

20. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- Names of groups to be written out in full at least once instead of the use of abbreviations and acronyms.
- Were the Farmers Forum and Land Managers Forum still operating? Hamish confirmed that they were and that the programme was more events based.
- A member asked whether all the Groups were still necessary. Grant advised that there were 5 main groups under the 5 main strategies that sit under the National Park Partnership Plan. The CNPA is also asked to attend or sit on a number of groups like COAT. Grant agreed to take a Paper back to the Board looking at the future operation of the Land Managers Forum, CDAG and Farmers Forum in due in course.
- Would Board representation be required on the group preparing the next Local Development Plan? Grant advised that the group were tasked on the implementation and monitoring of the current Local Development Plan and preparing evidence for the next Local Development Plan. He added that all policy decisions come to the Board at their discussion sessions and at formal meetings.
- Concern around the word '*strategic*' being used in the title of the Cairngorms National Park Strategic Delivery Group when Board representation was not present on this group. It was agreed that the word '*Strategic*' would be dropped from the name of this group and that the minutes of the meetings of this group would be circulated to all Board members to give them a better understanding of what the group discusses. David Cameron also suggested that recirculating the terms of reference of the Cairngorms National Park Delivery Group would help clarify the role of this group.

21. The Board discussed the attendance at Community Council meetings and agreed the following:

- All Board members were encouraged to attend community council meetings that they find local to themselves.
- Councillors and directly elected members for relevant areas agreed to meet to agree the community councils they would cover to ensure even coverage in the areas that they cut across. They agreed to come back to the Board with a list of who was covering which area.
- A suggestion was made to all locally elected Board Members to encourage Community Councils to make the CNPA a standing item on their Agenda.
- A suggestion was made for Board Members to be provided with a recognised set of four to five items to tell the Community Council. Grant advised that this is what the Board Issues Briefing provides.

22. **The Board discussed and agreed the proposed feedback mechanism described in the Paper.**
23. **The Board agreed to the following:**
- a) **Nominations and substitutes for Cairngorms Nature, Active Cairngorms and the Economic Forum.**
  - b) **Membership of the Communications and Brand Group.**
  - c) **Any changes to membership of the other Groups/Committees for the coming year.**
  - d) **Attendance at Community Council Meetings.**
  - e) **Proposed feedback mechanism from Groups to Board as set out in the Paper.**
24. **Actions:**
- i. **Changes C1 to C9 to be followed through on the Board membership of Committees and Groups.**
  - ii. **Names of Groups to be written out in full in future.**
  - iii. **Grant Moir to take a Paper back to the Board to clarify the role and purpose of the Land managers Forum, CDAG and Farmers Forum.**
  - iv. **The Cairngorms National Park Strategic Delivery Group to be renamed as the Cairngorms National Park Delivery Group.**
  - v. **Minutes of the meeting of the Cairngorms National Park Delivery Group to be circulated to the Board.**
  - vi. **David Cameron to circulate the Cairngorms National Park Delivery Group Terms of Reference to the Board.**
  - vii. **Councillors and directly elected members for relevant areas agreed to meet to agree the areas that they would cover to ensure even coverage in the areas that they cut across. They agreed to come back to the Board with a list of who was covering which area.**

#### **Communications and Engagement Programme 2016/17 (Paper 4)**

25. **Francoise van Buuren, Head of Communications and Engagement introduced Paper 4 which provides an update on the communications and engagement activities carried out**

during 2015/ 16 and seeks to gain approval for the proposed programme of activity for 2016/ 17.

26. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- With reference to the new website with staff being responsible for updating their own pages, was there a risk that staff would do this well in the beginning with this effort trailing off? Therefore was someone in place to monitor to ensure that this risk would be managed? Francoise advised that that was part of Donald Ross's role and that in addition through the use of google analytics it was possible to determine the pages being used and not being used by the general public. Responsible staff and monitoring teams had also been identified to oversee website maintenance and updates.
- Clarification was sought on whether the benchmarking of the website would be against key indicators or against other National Parks? Francoise advised that it was envisaged to be against key indicators however agreed that against other National Parks was a good idea and agreed to add this.
- The need to be more precise in measuring performance against Key Performance Indicators in the Corporate Plan and not to be frightened to set targets that may be stalled by limited resources as this could set weight for future negotiations.
- The need to review the practical steps to show the value of the 'Make it Yours' campaign and to get the messages to the residents in communities in the National Park. Francoise agreed that this was an area identified as needing more work and that in the future, in respect of the preparation Cairngorms Nature Events, co-ordination meetings would take place in the four locations inviting the Community Ranger and key members of the community identified by the Community Development Officer. It was hoped that it time these communities would become enthused by these annual events and in turn begin to take ownership of organising and delivering them.

**27. The Board agreed to approve the proposed Communications and Engagement Programme for 2016/17.**

**28. Action:               None.**

### **Audit Committee Annual Report (Paper 5)**

29. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services, introduced Paper 5 which presents the Audit Committee Annual Report.

30. The Audit Committee Convener, Gordon Riddler advised that all recommendations found as part of the Internal Audit report had been picked up and were in hand by Management Team. He thanked the Audit Committee and staff for all their hard work in getting the Audit Committee Annual Report to that stage.

31. The Board considered Paper 5 and the following points were discussed:

- The need to highlight that part of the tasks of the Audit Committee is to identify and address risks and therefore a suggestion was made to amend the name of the Audit Committee to the Audit & Risk Committee. This was agreed.
- A suggestion was made to include in future reports a headline snapshot of the top five risks included in the current risk register. David advised that he would be happy to include this in the future and meantime the current risk register would be circulated round the Board for information.

32. **The Board noted the report**

33. **Actions:**

- i. The Audit Committee to be renamed to The Audit & Risk Committee.**
- ii. A headline snapshot of the Risk Register to be included in future Audit & Risk Committee reports.**
- iii. The current Risk Register to be circulated to the Board.**

### **Cairngorms Tourism Partnership and Action Plan (Paper 6)**

34. Murray Ferguson introduced Paper 6 which provides an update on the revised approach to tourism delivery, as agreed by the CNPA Board in September 2014.

35. The Board engaged in a full discussion and the following points were made:

- Was there a gap in visitor information around field sports? Murray advised specialised activities were not always caught by the visitor survey but that the NPA has information on this area through the Land Management Survey and through discussions with the field sports tourism group.
- What was the reasoning behind targeting only the following market segments: Adventure seekers and Natural advocates? Murray advised that a clear focus was required on who to attract compared to the strengths of the remainder of Scotland. Murray agreed to circulate a link to the segmentation approach used to come to this direction to the Board.

- The need to focus more on economic value rather than head count of visitors to grasp the real picture and monitor progress of Key Performance Indicators.
- A suggestion was made to put the information out to businesses early November when both the Cairngorms Business Partnerships Annual Conference and Tourism Partnership have their meetings. Murray informed the Board that the visitor survey information will be sent out that week to all businesses in the Park.
- A suggestion was made that the information be amalgamated into an Infographic. Pete confirmed that this is what they had planned.
- The need for the aspiration of the Cairngorms National Park is that every aspect of visitor experience should exceed expectations.
- A suggestion was made on the potential of promoting all the UK National Parks.
- The importance of targeting the overseas market of visitors who spend more and stay for longer.
- The need to think laterally on how to reach overseas visitors.

**36. The Board noted the progress.**

**37. Action:**

- i. The results of the Visitor Survey to be sent to businesses early November to coincide with the Cairngorms Business Partnership Annual Conference and the Tourism Partnership meeting.**
- ii. Murray to circulate the link to the segmentation approach to the Board**

## **AOCB**

38. The Convener advised that he and the Deputy Board Convener were unable to attend the next Board meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015. He advised that in accordance with Board Standing Orders they had nominated Eleanor Mackintosh who subsequently agreed, to convene the meeting in their absence.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

39. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 16 October 2015, The Victoria Hall, Ballater.

40. Meeting ended at 12.15