
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held by telephone/ video conference on Friday 23rd September 2022 at 9am

PRESENT

Xander McDade (Convener)	Eleanor Mackintosh
Geva Blackett	Willie McKenna
Peter Argyle	Ian McLaren
Carolyn Caddick (Deputy Convener)	Dr Fiona McLean
Deirdre Falconer	Willie Munro
Pippa Hadley	Dr Gaener Rodger
Janet Hunter	Derek Ross
John Kirk	

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive
Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Place
Andy Ford, Director of Nature & Climate Change
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board

Apologies: John Latham Anne Rae Macdonald
Judith Webb

Welcome and Introduction

1. Carolyn Caddick, Board Deputy Convener informed everyone that the Board Convener was running late so she would Chair until he arrived. She welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.

Declarations of Interest

2. The Board Convener invited declarations of interest.
3. There were no interests declared.

Minutes of Last Meetings held – for approval

4. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 10th June 2022 were agreed with no amendments. Gaener Rodger proposed the minutes and Peter Argyle seconded the minutes.

John Kirk arrived at the meeting at this point.

5. The draft Confidential Minutes of the last meeting held on 10th June 2022 were agreed with no amendments. Gaener Rodger proposed the minutes and Fiona McLean seconded the minutes.

Matters Arising

6. There were no actions arising from the previous minutes.

7. **Action Points Arising: None**

Land Reform in a Net Zero Nation (Paper 1)

8. Grant Moir, CEO introduced Paper 1 which presents the response of the Park Authority to the Scottish Government (SG) consultation – Land Reform in a Net Zero Nation which was launched on 4 July by SG and would close this coming Sunday. Scottish Government will use these responses and build up proposals accordingly.

Xander McDade, Board Convener and Geva Blackett joined the meeting.

9. As the Board Convener, Xander McDade had arrived, the Deputy Board Convener passed the chairing on to him at this point. The Board Convener thanked the Deputy Board Convener.
10. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and the following comments and observations were made:
 - a) Query around landholdings owning ground around communities and charity type landowners would there be restrictions on them coming in and buying up the land? Land clearances would be the last thing would want to see, concern raised around carbon credits and land clearances of people working on the ground. CEO advised that the consultation was aimed at addressing issues to do with scale and concentration of land ownership> however, the public interest test was aimed at potential future purchases of land rather than current ownership. The consultation does have proposals that land could be broken up into smaller parcels when it is sold or purchased to encourage a greater range of ownership.
 - b) Agreed with suggestion that land responsibility statement and land management plans are rolled into one. Resource implications to for all parties in taking forward this proposal including any sign-off process. CEO advised that it would be dependent on which way land management plans are implemented, how they are set up and what the landowners may need to produce as to the resource implications. Not enough information yet on this in the consultation. With regards to Para 11; transparency, the idea would be for the potential owner to be registered for tax in UK or EU. Would this impact investment? CEO advised that it was quite difficult to say and would depend on the afore mentioned structures if the land holder can register for tax in UK. CEO agreed to put 'potential' on point one.
 - c) With regards to community empowerment, plea made to put something to SG as need to get something for community groups as to how they work through procurement. The Board Convener commented that he did not think

going find disagreement of importance of SG being committed properly to community involvement. Real drive from some of those involved to see that community ownership. Convener shared the concerns of the member that communities are part of the solution and that this bill should aim to make involvement easier.

- d) Concern raised around para 7 and land management plans, danger going to become hugely complicated or so simplistic become an expensive tick box exercise. We as a group have 5 basic concerns who is going to answer the questions and which point will the answers come out for further consultation. CEO commented that the questions have been included in the draft response as these are the types of issues that the land reform bill team will need to address as the Bill is developed and it goes through scrutiny through parliament.
- e) The Board Convener commented that these were interesting questions and that there is potential scope of the NPA to look at potential answers over the coming period. Comment made that the CNPA were one relatively small area in the whole of Scotland, we might think it's sorted while another organisation may differ of opinion. SG Land Reform Team would have to take that into account.
- f) Agreement that help and support is required for community groups on how to use the Public Procurement Register and as National Park Authority we could be providing training and expertise to support these groups.
- g) Question posed around Item 2, concerning land holdings over 3000Ha, how many of those 40 landholdings had different owners? Comment made that there was already a concentration of a few people owning a lot of the land in the National Park and the effect that is already having causing undue influence in the National Park. CEO advised that it was just shy of 40 different owners' retrospective element
- h) Comment made about using the word estates, suggestion made to use the term large scale landholdings, need to remove the word and replace, charities own this too. CEO advised that he thought that estates was the right word e.g., Abernethy Estate is run by RSPB, Mar Lodge Estate by NTS, Atholl Estate by Atholl Estates.
- i) With reference to No. 13 carbon credits, concern that we fail to be specific enough, suggestion made to highlight that money is also used for helping to secure jobs, more resilient and social infrastructure which is wording lifted from a SG report published in July 2022. CEO advised that he would be happy to explain the term Just transition if the Board felt that would be helpful.
- j) Agreement with an earlier point made that the challenge lay whether there will be scrutiny of land management plans. Will a plan be produced by a consultant that sits on a shelf. Potential it just creates its own industry. Potential to think about whether communities could avoid tax when purchasing land. CEO advised that he'd be happy to add this in, at end, tax regime around taxation in community purchases.
- k) Recognition that it was early days in the process, more questions than answers, paper does good job of that, hoping for more detail proposals. Challenge for us will be how it will be implemented, what works for rest of Scotland may not work for the Highlands, would not want to end up with bureaucratic system that is expensive.

- l) Comment made that they agree with the comments already made on land management plans. Key thing is link to public funding, scrutiny and compliance should be set when grants are awarded. 40 landholdings, appeals processes, sign off plans, relationship implications, NPPP consensual participation. CEO commented that the resource is interesting, if spent time upstream refining a plan then there is potential to spend less time trying to resolve individual schemes further downstream in the process. Reason we have NP is to be a bit different and we have an opportunity to try to link to the ministerially approved strategic management plan for this area.
 - m) One member suggested that what was in the NPPP should be reflected in what people should put in land management plan.
11. **The Board approve the proposed Cairngorms National Park Authority response (as detailed in Annex I) to the Land Reform in a Net Zero Nation consultation subject to the agreed changes in paragraph 10a) to 10m) above will be made prior to submission by the CEO.**
12. **Action Point Arising:**
- i. **CEO to make amendments to the Land Reform in a Net Zero Nation Consultation Response prior to submission to Scottish Government.**

AOCB

13. The Board Convener gave special mention to Board Members Peter Argyle, Pippa Hadley, Ian McLaren, Carolyn Caddick and John Latham who would be leaving at end of the month. He gave special thanks to Peter Argyle who was a senior elder of the Board and who was once Convener of the Board and Deputy Convener of the Planning Committee. He gave special mention to Pippa, Ian and John who have championed nature. Wishing you all the best, with going to do with your free time, don't stay a stranger.
14. Member asked for some more information on what happened with Glenmore Community Trust and what sort of learning could be taken forward with that.,

Date of Next Meeting

15. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 25th November 2022.
16. The public part of this meeting closed 9.48am