
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held in the Grant Arms, Grantown-on-Spey on Friday 26 June 2015 at 11.00am

PRESENT

Duncan Bryden (Convenor)
Peter Argyle
Rebecca Badger
Angela Douglas
Paul Easto
Dave Fallows
Katrina Farquhar
Jeanette Gaul
Kate Howie
Gregor Hutcheon

John Latham
Bill Lobban
Eleanor Mackintosh
Willie McKenna
Fiona Murdoch
Gordon Riddler
Gregor Rimell
Judith Webb
Brian Wood (Deputy Convenor)

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,
Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services,
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board.

Apologies: None.

Welcome and Introduction

1. Duncan Bryden, the Convenor, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Grantown-on-Spey. He reminded everyone present that this would be his final Board meeting as he was coming off the Board in early September.

2. The Convenor said that a very successful seminar had taken place the previous evening. He added that those who did attend enjoyed two different talks from inspirational speakers who spoke about the built and historic built heritage in Grantown. The Convenor gave thanks to those who had organised it.
3. There were no apologies.
4. The Convenor advised that Item 7, Election of Board Convenor on the Agenda would be taken before Item 6: CEO Report.

Minutes of Last Meeting held on 27 March, 2015 – for approval

5. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 March 2015 were agreed subject to the following amendments:
 - Bill Lobban to be added as Present.
6. The draft Minutes of the last confidential meeting held on 27 March 2015 were agreed with no amendments.

Matters Arising

7. The Convenor provided an update on the Action points from the previous meeting:
 - Action Point at Para 13 (i) – Complete: Audit Committee Paper on Health & Safety Activity circulated around Board Members.
 - Action Point at Para 13 (ii) – Complete.
 - Action Point at Para 17 (i) – Complete: Amendments made and Corporate Plan 2015 – 2018 submitted to the Scottish Government. Approval from SG yesterday for Corporate Plan – once all through circulate round members in next couple of weeks - Grant
 - Action Point at Para 21 (i) – Complete: copy of the Financial Memorandum extract that sets out the respective accountability of Board and Chief Executive circulated around Board Members.
 - Action Point at Para 21 (ii) – Noted.
 - Action point at Para 33 (i) – Contact has been made with Community Council Chair and Agent and the proposal is programmed for preparation as one of number of pieces of non-statutory guidance – paper to come to Planning Committee in July.
 - Action Point at Para 38 (i) – Outstanding: Kate Howie to get in touch with Adam Streeter-Smith
 - Action Point at Para 38 (ii) – Complete the new route was now on the Plan.

- Action point 44 (i) – Complete: Keep Scotland Beautiful report circulated to the Board.
- Action Point 48 (i) – In hand, will be acted on in the next delivery monitory report.- included in the email that was circulated.
- Action Point 53 (i) & (ii) – In hand: These are programmed for a revised monitoring format in the December Board meeting.

Declarations of Interest

8. There were no interests declared.

Election of Board Convenor (Paper 2)

9. David Cameron, Proper Officer, conducted the process of the election. He made it clear that there had been the potential for Board Members unable to attend to make written statements of nomination for the position in advance of the meeting. David advised that no statements had been received and that all Board Members were present.

10. David Cameron invited nominations for the position of Board Convenor. Brian Wood was proposed by Gregor Rimell and seconded by Judith Webb; Peter Argyle was proposed by Eleanor Mackintosh and seconded by Bill Lobban. Both Brian Wood and Peter Argyle confirmed they were content to be nominated for the position of Convenor.

11. Nominees were invited to make a statement in support of their nomination. Brian Wood presented his statement to the Board, followed by Peter Argyle.

12. Following election by secret ballot, the Proper Officer declared Peter Argyle the new Convenor, to take up the position of Convenor on the 5th September 2015 for three years by 10 votes to 9.

13. Brian Wood was the first to congratulate Peter Argyle and pledged his full support. The Convenor, on behalf of the Board offered sincere congratulations to Peter Argyle and advised he would be watching from the sidelines.

14. Actions:

- i. **Peter Argyle to take the position of Board Convenor on 8th September 2015.**

CEO Report (Paper I)

15. 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:
- a) The Corporate Plan had been signed off by the Scottish Government yesterday.
 - b) The funding for the Mountains and the People project had been confirmed and the project is well underway.
 - c) A meeting that he and Pete Crane had attended with the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) to consider joint promotion work between the Highland Wildlife Park and the Cairngorms National Park / Cairngorms Nature in Edinburgh Zoo and vice versa.
 - d) The Rural Affairs, Food and Environment (RAFE) delivery board met again on Tuesday 23rd June 2015 and this meeting was chaired by Richard Lochhead with Aileen MacLeod present. He added that the work was beginning to carry momentum on digital, communications, climate change and RAFE outcomes.
16. The Board discussed the following:
- a) A plea was made for the Board to be kept fully aware of the VAT issue arising with the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Partnership. Grant agreed to circulate any relevant information to the Board at the appropriate time. In addition, David agreed to bring the issue to the Finance Committee at their next meeting.
 - b) A request was made for the Board to have the opportunity to visit a peatland site that had been restored. Grant advised that it would be best to see one in the process of being restored as it would be much more interesting and agreed to schedule a visit in for the Board this year.
 - c) A request was made for an update on how the Moorland Partnership was working. Grant reported that initial meetings had taken place however another meeting of the whole group would be taking place in two weeks time and after that meeting an update would be circulated the Board outlining the progress made at that meeting and what the next steps were going to be.
 - d) The review of Tourism Structures in Aberdeenshire and how it was progressing.
 - e) Concern was raised regarding the short timescales involved for reviewing the Ranger Support and implementing the changes. Grant advised that an informal discussion would take place in the autumn with a formal board paper in December 2015. He added that the Ranger Services were aware of these timescales and it was hoped that the new arrangements would be in place for the start of the 16/17 financial year.
 - f) Praise for the Nick Baker Bio Buzz event as part of the recent Cairngorms Nature event. Congratulations to be passed to those who organised it and recognition that

it had done a good job at promoting the special qualities of the Cairngorms National Park.

- g) The importance of the recent visitor survey in making businesses more aware of what visitors think of the services that they provide. The need to improve awareness of the concept of the Cairngorms National Park brand.

17. The Convenor informed the Board that the Convenor's group meets regularly following each Board meeting and at the last one the Convenor's group agreed that in future the CEO report would set out some of the work and progress of other key committees and group involving Board members. The Board were also informed that the process of identifying who from the Board would sit on these groups would also be reviewed at the next Board meeting.

18. The Board noted the Paper.

19. Actions:

- i. Paper outlining the VAT issue within the Tomintoul and Glenlivet project to be brought to the Finance Committee at their next meeting. Relevant information to be circulated to the full board at the appropriate time.**
- ii. Board visit to peatland restoration site to be organised to take place in 2015.**
- iii. Update on the progress and next steps of the Moorland Partnership to be circulated to the Board following their next meeting.**
- iv. Board membership on groups to be discussed by new Convenor, Peter Argyle, and Grant Moir.**

Active Cairngorms: A new Outdoor Access Strategy for the Cairngorms National Park (Paper 3)

20. Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services apologised that David Clyne was unable to attend the meeting today. Pete introduced Paper 3 which updates the Board on the work in developing Active Cairngorms and seeks approval to adopt the strategy and action plan.

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

- a) General praise for the Outdoor Access Strategy and the Action Plan.
- b) Clarification was sought as to where the Strategy and Plan sits and links with other strands such as healthy eating, tourism and business partnerships.
- c) Concern was raised that the evidence suggested that engagement was more focussed on residents than on tourism businesses. Pete confirmed that better linkages with the Cairngorms Business Partnership could be formed.
- d) Concern was raised around the need for business representation on the proposed partnership.
- e) Query as to when the membership of the proposed partnership would be formed. Pete advised that the membership was indicative and would not be formed until after the next Board meeting in September. Pete agreed that a suitable representative from the business community could be sourced.
- f) A concern was raised regarding the level of detail that was missing from the Action Plan. Grant advised that this would be one of the initial tasks of the partnership when formed.
- g) In reference to Annex 2 of the Paper, disappointment that many respondents had not submitted a response. Pete clarified that where the paper stated 'Did not submit' this actually meant that the respondent did not wish to disclose their name into the public domain and that they had submitted a comment.
- h) Concern was raised that businesses had appeared not to have submitted a response to the consultation. Pete confirmed that the Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF) had been heavily involved in it. Pete went on to advise that where people/ groups were broadly positive about the strategy and action plan and had had lots of involvement in the discussions from the beginning, no response had been submitted. Grant confirmed that engagement had gone beyond the list of formal consultees presented in the paper.
- i) A suggestion was made for the Board to agree a substitute from the Board in addition to a Board nominee to ensure that one Board member was always present at the meetings of the partnership. Grant agreed to this and added that the identity of these would be agreed at the Board meeting in September.
- j) Recognition that there is only so much time people can give and there is a challenge in getting people to participate.
- k) Praise for the appealing layout of the strategy and action plan.

22. The Board agreed to:

- a) adopt the Active Cairngorms Strategy and Action Plan;**
- b) the formation of an Active Cairngorms delivery partnership to include a business representative;**
- c) nominate, at its September meeting, a Board member and a substitute to sit on the Active Cairngorms delivery partnership;**
- d) be presented with an annual report setting out progress on Active Cairngorms annually.**

23. Actions:

- i. A suitable representative(s) from the business community to be sourced to sit on the Partnership.**
- ii. At their meeting in September, the Board to nominate a substitute in addition to a Board Member to sit on the Partnership.**

National Park Partnership Plan 2017-22 (Paper 4)

24. The Convenor advised that Paper 4 should be for decision and not for discussion as the Agenda stated.
25. Hamish Trench, Director of Conservation and Visitor Experience introduced Paper 4 which seeks agreement on the approach to developing the next National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) 2017-22.
26. Grant Moir added that they hoped that it would be a user-friendly document that could be understood at a glance what was to be achieved.
27. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Appreciation of having sight of the Paper at an early stage in the development of the new National Park Partnership Plan.
 - b) The lessons learned from previous National Park Partnership Plans and the changes being implemented going forward,
 - c) Overcoming consultation fatigue.
 - d) Agreement of the benefits of integrating the development of the National Park Partnership Plan and the new Local Development Plan and thinking about how both would interact from the outset.
 - e) A suggestion was made to make the statements at Paragraph 7c and 7e clearer to illustrate which groups of people each is referring to. Grant agreed to do this.
 - f) Agreement that a more succinct NPPP document would be a positive improvement.
 - g) Recognition of the value of inviting Partners to Informal Board Discussions before embarking on National Park Partnership Plan Main Issues Report.
 - h) Awareness of the challenge of Partners committing to delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan.
 - i) The option of having a sub group of the Board to help with the development of the new National Park Partnership Plan.
 - j) Board membership on the Cairngorms National Park Strategic Delivery group.

- k) In reference to paragraph 11 of the Paper, concern was raised that it was a top down approach and that communities would not be engaged. Hamish advised that the intention was to make use of existing work (Community Action Plans) and building upon it. He added that there is community representation on the delivery group in the form of the Association of Community Councils (AOCC).
- l) Sound evidence gathering, how it is built into the process and how it will be used.

28. The Board agreed the approach to developing the next Partnership Plan including a main issues consultation in 2016 with the proviso that there is:

- a) **Early involvement of the Board and engagement with Partners in a way to be agreed by the new Board Convenor Peter Argyle.**
- b) **Evidence is used correctly to make the best possible case.**

29. Action:

- i. **Peter Argyle, Hamish Trench and Grant Moir to agree opportunities for the Board to engage directly with Partners.**

2012-2015 Corporate Plan Review (Paper 5)

30. David Cameron introduced Paper 5 which presents an overview of delivery against the outcomes established for the Authority in the agreed Corporate Plan for 2012 to 2015.

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

- a) Concern was raised with regards to the business sectors perception on the progression of digital connectivity. David clarified that the progress was from the point of view of CNPA staff on how far they think we have come to achieving what we originally set out to do.
- b) A suggestion was made that in future reviews to include a snapshot of the direction of travel of especially the outcomes highlighted in red. Grant confirmed as this was the last one in respect of the 2012 – 2015 Corporate Plan it did not have the direction of travel included however a different approach would be used for the first review of the 2015 – 2018 Corporate Plan which would come before the Board at their December meeting.
- c) Query as to what happens to the outcomes that had been coded as complete. David advised that some would be carried over into the new Corporate Plan as next phase outcomes whilst others would not be taken any further as a consequence of the need to prioritise resources.

- d) The timeline going forward and indication as to which of the outcomes would be dropped and which carried over into the new Corporate Plan.
- e) A suggestion was made to include a commentary in the review of the Corporate Plan 2012-2015 targets and outcomes that states that the context of some of the outcomes is difficult to measure but has been as far as possible. This was agreed.
- f) Welcoming of a new monitoring system.

32. The Board agreed to the recommendations.

33. Action:

- 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 health warning surrounding the context of the outcome of the target, where appropriate.**

Update of Cairngorms LEADER Programme: Formation of Charitable Trust (Paper 6)

34. David Cameron introduced Paper 6 which presents an update on the development of the Cairngorms LEADER Programme for 2014 to 2020. He highlighted the following points:
- a) The National LEADER Programme centralised IT system would be delayed and it was estimated that it would not come into play until March/ April 2016.
 - b) It is hoped to launch the Cairngorms LEADER programme in September, with processes supported in paper form with a view to backfilling it electronically afterwards once the central IT system is live.
35. The Board engaged in a full discussion and the following points were made:
- a) Recognition that if the Cairngorms Local Action Group (LAG) were to be awarded the £2.97 million that would be a very good result considering other Local Action Groups having their funding reduced.
 - b) Agreement that communities would benefit from the Cairngorms LEADER project starting early.
 - c) Concern that there was poor representation from the business sector on the LAG. It was advised that there had never been a threshold or ceiling for the number of members to sit on the LAG. The LAG had agreed a skills matrix and a need for business support was identified. However due to circumstances (a business representative had recently resigned from the LAG) the position was currently vacant. A request had previously been made to the Board to forward any suggested

