

INCLUSIVE CAIRNGORMS

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2015
at 11.00am in CNPA office, Grantown-on-Spey with video link to Ballater

Present:

In Grantown:

Anne MacLean (Chair)	Mobility and Access Committee Scotland
Doris Carlin	B&S Access Panel
Morag Campbell	B&S Access Panel
Hector MacDonald	Scottish Disability Equality Forum
Ivor Souter	Public Transport Unit, Highland Council
Elsbeth Grant	CNPA
Pete Crane	CNPA
Gavin Miles	CNPA
Adam Streeter Smith	CNPA
Jane Richardson	CNPA (minutes)

In Ballater:

Eric Baird (Vice Chair)	Cairngorms Ranger Services
Kevin Hutchens	Independent Social Worker
Alasdair Johnston	NP resident
Vittoria Hancock	Scottish Rural Churches Group
Reverend David Barr	

Loch Lomond

Alison Cush

Apologies:

Anne Dempster	Strath Sunshine Club
Suresh Paul	Equal Adventure
Ruaridh Ormiston	Newtonmore Riding Centre
Roslyn Munro	B&S Community Transport Company
Liz Scott	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Gordon Riddler	CNPA Board
Gregor Rimmell	CNPA Board
David Atkinson	Scottish Churches Rural Group
Margaret McLaren	Friends of Caberfeidh
Carolyn Cornfield	Caberfeidh Horizons
Carole Paterson	Braemar 3 rd Age Lunch Group
Natalie Hutcheson	Aberdeenshire Council
Yvonne Strachan	Scottish Government Equalities Unit
Bob Bennett	Perth and Kinross Access Group

It is noted that Gregor Rimmell has been appointed to replace Gordon Riddler as the CNPA Board rep, but could not attend the meeting today. EG to write to Gordon Riddler, on behalf of the Group, to thank him for his work over the past 3 years. **ACTION EG**

Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made and apologies noted.

Minutes of Last Meeting

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2015 were approved subject to the following amendments:
 - Para 23, 3rd bulletpoint to be amended to EB (not EC).
 - Pages 4, 5 and 6: there are two number 23's – numbering to be amended accordingly.

Matters arising from the Minutes

3. Ref para 3: AM advised that Sight Action provide training to those who are visually impaired but it is only based in Inverness for Highland. DC to pass on details of Jack Cooper who provided free (traveling expenses were paid) 1:1 training for visually impaired people recently and is happy to provide this in people's homes. EG to make contact with Jack and ascertain potential interest. **Action EG.**
4. Ref para 4: The Easy Access Paths Guide is now available on the CNPA website.
5. Ref para 6: Mini Golf Course – HM advised he has received a positive response stating they are going to change the contours on the mini golf course.
6. Ref para 15: DC advised it was too late to include the RDA information in the B&S Access Guide but it will be included in the next print run. MC tabled the guide for the Group and requested any additions are passed to them for inclusion in the next print run. EG to advise Ruaridh to contact DC / MC if he has any inclusions. **Action EG.**
7. Ref para 17: EG circulated the link to the Active Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy on the CNPA website to the Group.
8. Ref new para 24, bulletpoint 5: confirmed that LEADER is now a standing item on meeting agendas.
9. Ref new para 27: Low Income
 - KH asked for figures on migrant workers and where they come from in the Cairngorms as they play an important part in the local economy. EG to progress. **Action EG.**
 - KH asked if someone from STUC could attend a meeting to discuss the problems with vehicle transport / public transport in the area. IS asked what the transport issues are as there is a current consultation ongoing in Highland; they are asking questions as to what people would like to see for the next round of tenders (which is going live on 1st January 2017 and the tendering process is happening now). AM asked if Inclusive

Cairngorms and the CNPA had been consulted. IS advised not individually but the consultation is online and is available in Community Centres, Service Points and there have been 2 public meetings in Aviemore already. Responses are requested by 13th December. EG to circulate the consultation to B&S people in the Group. **Action EG.**

- KH suggested looking at how migrant workers are included in the life and work of the NP and perhaps STUC could have an input. AM thought there would be a better contact for migrant workers than STUC and the Grampian Regional Equality Council and Highland Equalities Forum was suggested.

10. Ref new para 32: KH asked for stats on the amount of houses that are taken off the rental market to rent out as holiday homes. GM advised up to 60-70%, though some are such large houses they would not have met the needs in the local community anyway. KH suggested they could be adapted to flats and provide even more accommodation. AM stressed persuading people to do that would be difficult.

Guest speakers – Affordable Housing in CNP – Gavin Miles

11. GM explained the role of the CNPA in planning terms. The 5 Local Authorities are both Planning and Housing Authorities; the CNPA is almost a planning authority, but not quite. The Housing Authorities spend money on affordable housing and invest in plans associated in the Housing Strategy where affordable housing is supported. All affordable housing built in the NP is built with funding from the public sector, through the LA into Housing Associations; it may be a private developer who builds it, but the subsidy is from the public sector via Scottish Government. CNPA prepare a Development Plan to identify where housing should go in the NP and has a small influence over affordable housing. The CNPA Development Plan states that 25% of affordable housing is the most that can be asked for a private development. If a Housing Association or the Council buy the land officers could ask for 100%, and, although this would be ideal, the reality is officers cannot force a private person to build affordable housing. When an application for housing is received what generally happens is 25%, or some other amount that makes sense will be requested, (a quarter of every development may not be possible). Sometimes the LA needs to put in money to support that. A developer may commit to building units with a large subsidy for each unit through the LA, but if the money is there and the housing doesn't get built for a while it may not be built as affordable in the end. Unfortunately, it is more about money than planning. Officers would like to see as much affordable housing in the NP as possible but are constrained by the fact that the CNPA have a single role as planning authority in identifying sites in terms of them giving permission and trying to persuade Scottish Government and LA's to invest more money in the NP but the CNPA do not have money to put into it. When the CNPA receive an application officers look for a proportion of affordable housing it but this is dictated by the LPA's Housing Strategy for that area. Developers are made aware of the need for affordable housing within the area and it is a misconception that the CNPA can control what private developers do but unfortunately this is not the case.
12. AM asked if it is still a quarter for larger developments? GM responded a quarter is what the CNPA can realistically make be built although officers appreciate this is at least half of what is needed. AM agreed that it is more about money than planning as Housing

Associations are getting less money from Scottish Housing Association Grants thus reducing their ability to buy the houses, and developers like doing them first as they know they are going to get the money.

13. HM raised specially designed homes for life; BS have to offer a degree of access and this is constantly increasing, wheelchairs are getting bigger, weights are getting heavier which creates design problems. HM raised concern that one blanket size fits all across the whole country and suggested it could be best dealt with by fiscal means. The government may earmark some money in this funding and create a fund that can be used nationally for the creation of these homes for life. HM suggested this be used on a needs basis identified from within the NP or LA as the figure of 10% may be fine for one area but not another and suggested flexibility on this needs to be built into the system in the future. EG to send paper on this to AM. **ACTION EG**
14. KH asked how the CNPA define affordable within the NP in terms of work. GM advised Scottish Government decide what is affordable and the CNPA use that definition on anything beneath market level. There is an issue in that so much Council Housing stock has been lost throughout the NP and very little is left. AM advised that B&S had the highest sell of Council houses in Scotland in 2003 which was a huge loss and they have not been replaced. GM advised in the last 10 years they have built almost as many houses as were sold off but it took 10 years to do it!
15. IS suggested developers consider the public transport network and how it can be supported at an earlier stage in development as it should be a more integral part of the planning system rather than hindsight. Could this be by way of a developer contribution for the long term benefits to the community? GM advised there already is a policy to allow for developer contributions and this relies on the roads authority advising the CNPA of what is needed.
16. EB suggested zoning could be addressed in the planning process and asked if the NP were proactive in encouraging the community in the right to buy land for the community and build the houses themselves. EB asked if current land reform proposals are moving in the right direction to address affordable housing issues in the CNPA and stressed that land ownership impacts negatively on the community with regards to development. GM advised it's more about the value of the land and zoning is actually a red herring i.e. if the field beside a zoned field is owned for housing it is worth so much but it is then likely that land owners will put just as high a price on it as it they know it is likely that it can be built on. GM advised community purchasing has been tried but it is a vastly complicated process as funding constantly changes and it is challenging for the community to maintain it. CNPA would recommend getting the land and then enabling a Housing Association as they know how to progress the development side.

CNPA Design Awards – Gavin Miles

17. GM advised the CNPA would like to repeat the success of the 2012 Design Awards and attract more entries. This time there will be a smaller judging panel of experts. GM asked if a member of the Group would like to be included in the shortlisting process. It was

questioned why none of the previous design awards were wheelchair accessible and suggested it was made part of the criteria. GM advised that ideally entries that highlight inclusive design elements would be good but we do not know what will be submitted and it is about good examples of design in its widest sense. KH added that as a public body the CNPA should insist on this. AM stressed it is a competition and about individual people commissioning their own private houses and represents people in the park not just a certain group.

18. HM was nominated and seconded to sit on the shortlisting process on behalf of the Group.
19. MC suggested basic access should be integral in the design process when building houses for disabled people. HM advised that Building Standards (BS) request that now and they are trying to encourage this through SDEF but this is an additional layer over BS. BS are working with a school of architects to introduce undergraduate courses on valuer free design so it should be considered at the early stages of the design process.

CNPA Public Duties (standing item)

Outdoor Access (Adam)

20. AQSS informed £67,325 of funding has been obtained in the second Commonwealth Games Legacy Physical Activity fund - this will mainly be spent on expanding the health walks program across the NP and used to tackle the barriers to exercise people face. In terms of the GP referral scheme getting practices on board as part of active prescription rather than drug intervention. Looking at trying to deliver a monitoring platform for it to track the success of the health walks program and what is delivered.
21. Funding has been secured from Education Scotland for £18,000 to set up the Nordic Walking Program which targets female secondary school pupils as there is evidence at this age there is a drop off in activity. The key part is engaging schools in monitoring physical activity and to tie it in with the curriculum.
22. People counters are on the new Speyside Way extension (Aviemore to Kinraig) and last month 536 people passed (72% walkers, 28% cyclists) which is a healthy figure for this time of year and it is hoped this is tripled in summertime. The path around Carrbridge in Eilean Wood has been closed for some time due to an asbestos scare; this has now been resolved and the paths are open and the situation will be monitored to avoid recurrence.

Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF) update (Alasdair Johnston)

23. The LOAF received a presentation from Joanne from the River Dee Project on development along the Dee and access issues that arose, how they were dealt with and the difficulties around the inappropriate use of party camping, litter BBQs etc. Following the result of questionnaires they have looked at how people use the car parks and wild camping areas.
24. Janette Macleod from the LEADER team presented on LEADER funding.

25. There was discussion around the unresolved issues of turnstiles making life difficult for walkers / cyclists. ACQQ explained that presently the Council are reluctant to remove the turnstiles from either end of the Cambus O'May Bridge.

Planning: Cairngorm Mountain (Gavin Miles)

26. Natural Retreats are in the pre-application process for a major application for the redevelopment of the old day lodge facilities at the main car park. Information on this can be found on their website and any feedback is welcomed. Submission will be sometime next year. CNPA will call in this application and consult will the Group at that time. It will be one of the biggest developments that will happen in the area in a long time and it is an important visitor destination and good for the economy in B&S and the Highlands so it is important to get it as right as possible. EG had circulated a letter from Natural Retreats alerting to the pre-app but had not received any comments. AM advised the Group will need to see details and that is when the Group will comment in full. In the meantime it was agreed to write to Natural Retreats with a statement of intent saying the Group look forward to seeing the formal plans and hope all aspects of inclusion would be considered i.e. low income, access for disabled etc. EG to draft letter. **ACTION EG.**

Equalities: Cairngorm & Glenmore Project (Pete Crane)

27. PC brought this to the Group purely to alert them to the consultation which starts on 1st December, handouts were provided to give context to the consultation and PC will circulate links to consultees.
28. AM noted the path from the car park to the river – it is well used but the trouble is having to come back the same way, or by the shore where the sand is difficult for people with mobility issues.
29. KA asked if it would be easily accessed, would consideration be given to cars, a shuttle bus on peak season? PC advised the Strategy provides a clear commitment to look at the integrated transport from Aviemore so there is support to take this forward. Natural Retreats' intention is to improve public transport provisions.
30. AM asked if there was any focus on the ski-ing facility at Cairngorms as the facilities are poor and the carpark makes it difficult to access the facilities. PC advised the first consultation is about the general principal about what Natural Retreats plan to do, not the details. Natural Retreats will come forward with a detailed planning application but those decisions are not part of this process. PC advised Natural Retreats are committed to develop the facilities, car parking and improving public transport.
31. MC said the B&S Access Panel are very pleased they are considering the needs of the less able and asked regarding how accessible the public transport would be for disabled people. PC advised again this is purely about the principal not the details at this stage.
32. EG to circulate consultation details and drop in sessions to the Group. **ACTION EG.**

33. EB stated asked if there is a commitment from the Steering Group to imbed Inclusiveness into the Strategy? Information regarding signs, infrastructure, facilities, in terms of costs, should have concessions for high cost facilities. PC advised that there is from public bodies. KA asked about commitment from the private sector and charity bodies also? PC stressed the 5 public bodies that developed the Strategy are committed to equalities as a partnership and it has already gone through two EIA's. EB stated the visitor survey shows an alarming decline on disability in the area. PC could not comment on behalf of the private sector.
34. IS advised there is already a limited contract bus service that is accessible on the ski road; 5 bus shelters are to be erected on that route to enable access to vehicles for workers to the shuttle bus. IS stated the CNPA requested a specific type of shelter at Glenmore and requested a response on this. PC to contact IS today to clarify. **ACTION PC**. There is the possibility of seeking bus developments on part of the mountain. IS assured the bus shelters would be accessible for wheelchairs to turn around.
35. DB asked the percentage of private sector business on board. PC advised he cannot comment on behalf of the private sector. The disability market has been highlighted at national level and is something that the CNPA support and was presented on and taken on board at the recent CBP conference.
36. PC is happy to come back to the Group once the consultation is open. AM suggested having a meeting just on this and will discuss this with EG. **ACTION EG**

LEADER / Local Action Group Update – Eric Baird

37. Alice Mayne sent her apologies and provided EB with a full briefing note for the group which is attached to the minutes. LEADER are happy to have discussions at this stage.
38. Information is now available on the LEADER website: www.cairngorms-leader.org.
39. CLAG are signed up to equalities statements and once they have heard back from Scottish Government regarding data sharing then discussions to share applications to screen them can be had with the Group. EG asked how the Group could feed into screening applications, has a process for this been set out? EB advised it is an intention at the moment and once there is guidance from Scottish Government on data sharing discussions are to be had to work out exact protocols between the Leader and IC.
40. LEADER wish to include the Group in their annual review of the programme (first in autumn 2016) and are also asking the Group to help them make inclusiveness a reality within the process.
41. IS asked if transport issues could be eligible for funding through LEADER. EB suggested IS looks on the website for the main themes and the kind of projects they are supporting and target groups.

42. HM referred to a DVD produced by SDEF on disability awareness training that has been used in schools in Badenoch and Strathspey, and felt that greater use could be made of this in the Park. MC advised it is a very worthwhile project and anyone is welcome to the promotion pack, a toolkit is available for the whole thing so anyone can pick it up and use it. It was suggested this could be viewed at a future meeting.

Young People (standing item)

43. KH requested an update on Scottish Youth Hostel Association's work in the Park regarding young people and those on low incomes. EG advised she has a contact in the Youth Hostel Association and will ask them to attend a meeting. **ACTION: EG.**
44. AC advised that LL&TNPA are now promoting opportunities for ages 16-18 (previously 18 and over). This is seen as a way to respond to developing the young workforce and making links to the junior ranger programme offered for the first time this year in the Park.

Disability (standing item)

45. AQSS advised concerns passed to him from B&S Disability Access Panel relating to the quality of the path, going out of Kingussie towards Newtonmore - the public pavement is poor and access onto the Sustrans route is poor and steep for a person in a mobility scooter. This issue has been raised with Transport Scotland who replied that they are going to go and look at it as they are aware there are barriers such as this on sections of the national cycle network – they will assess but advised that cannot commit at this stage to funding of a solution which depends on costs. AQSS will follow this up.
46. EB noted in the recent Cairngorms Visitor Survey that 7% of participants were recorded as having a disability compared with the national average of 20% and raised concern that participation in the CNP is at a third of what it is nationally, and asked if it is of concern to the CNPA. EG advised this was viewed as an opportunity for businesses in the Park to do more to promote the area and their business to the disability market and this point was made at the recent Cairngorms Business Partnership conference. The CNPA can only go so far in terms of encouraging businesses to make changes and to promote themselves to the disability market. MC advised the B&S Access Panel are very active in this area and have been asked to do access audits, which have been well received by businesses.
47. EB suggested the Board member rep for IC should have a nominated deputy who is well informed to substitute as necessary. AM advised Gregor gave apologies and will discuss with EG if he would wish to appoint a deputy. **ACTION EG.**

Low Income (standing item)

48. EB raised, from the Visitor Survey, people with low income within the CNP has gone down to 18%, which is a serious trend and asked how will the CNPA be addressing this? AM suggested EG discuss with Heather as this raises fundamental questions re the direction of the NP regarding developing "a park for all". EG to ask Heather to attend the next meeting. EB requested Heather addresses the questions on disability and social grade. **ACTION EG.**

AOCB

49. Pavement Parking Bill response: consultation on double parking and parking on dropped kerbs circulated from Murray via EG. It is too late to put in a response but as Convenor

of the Mobility and Access Panel for Scotland AM tabled copies of their response for the Group which she felt would cover the Groups comments.

50. EG: A researcher at Bournemouth University is doing a project on dementia friendly tourism and is looking for volunteers to take part in interviews on this research – any interested parties to contact EG who will circulate the correspondence. EB suggested contacting the ranger services. Caberfeidh and Highland division of Alzheimer's Scotland were also suggested.
51. AM gave early warning that in 2016 the group will be looking to appoint another Chair and Vice Chair and suggested members start to consider their replacements.

Date of next meeting

14th April 2016 in CNPA offices, Grantown on Spey with video link to Ballater and Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park

**Elsbeth Grant
CNPA**