

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: CEO REPORT AND CONVENER UPDATE

Prepared by: GRANT MOIR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose:

1. To highlight to Board Members the main strategic areas of work that are being directed by Management Team. These are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver with partners the aspirations of the National Park Partnership Plan.

Conservation:

2. **Cairngorms Nature:** Delivery of the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan's three priorities of 'landscape-scale conservation', 'action for priority species' and 'involving people' continues to be on-track with no significant risks or barriers identified at this early stage. Funding via the Biodiversity Challenge Fund is delivering nature-friendly farming, freshwater restoration and species conservation projects across the Park. Another application for the second round of funding was submitted in February 2020. The Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend in May 2020 is under review due to Covid-19. A final decision on whether to postpone will be taken shortly.
3. **Cairngorms Capercaillie Project:** The development phase of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and LEADER funded project ends in March 2020. This phase covers the five main strands of project activity: improving over 10,000 hectares of habitat; strengthening existing monitoring work; researching the genetic diversity; raising awareness and understanding and piloting community-led conservation in Carrbridge. Learning and outcomes from development phase work, and proposals to work with five other communities of place and interest, will form the application for delivery phase.
4. **Woodland expansion targets:** We have commissioned a piece of work with the James Hutton Institute to quantify the area of suitable land potentially available for woodland expansion in Scotland and in the Cairngorms National Park. This allowed them to provide us with an indication of what the equivalent woodland creation target should or could be in the CNP. The results revealed that our current CNP target of 5,000 ha (over 5 years) is very much in line with the current national target of 12,000 ha per year. The results have also been mapped to provide an indication of how much of the National Park would be wooded by 2045 if this target is met. The answer is that at the current rate, by 2045 woodland cover in the national park would be less than 20%. This demonstrates that whilst our woodland targets are ambitious, they are also achievable and the impact on open habitats will be minimal. These findings were reported on at the Climate Conference on 9th March.

5. **Peatland Restoration:** Scottish Government has announced funding for peatland restoration in Scotland to the tune of £250million over the next ten years. This is very good news for us continuing to promote and project manage peatland restoration in the National Park. We are exploring options for future direct funding of the Peatland restoration to ease future project management.

6. **Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership:** Latest report to NHLF included below to give a flavour of the breadth of project work being undertaken alongside the continuing overall project management by staff and TGLP board.
 - a) **Peesie Project:** 5 Wader scrapes have been installed in the field below the Bird Hide and additional ones agreed in neighbouring fields. Extensive areas of rush cutting has been undertaken. Volunteers have been gathered to help with the final year of wader surveys. Legacy planning work is underway and a key stakeholder meeting has been held that established an agreed legacy approach for the Peesie Project. A soil health event is being discussed to be held in the summer for farmers in the T&G area. Machinery Loans have continued.
 - b) **Water Margin Management:** A fencing contractor is being procured to fence off a water margin on the River Avon on Ballindalloch Estate. The wader scrape has been installed. Woodland Trust are providing trees for the fenced off water margin. Works are due to commence in April. Other areas have been identified where improvements could be made to water margins. These sites could be taken forward once match funding budget is finalised.
 - c) **Fish Barrier Easement:** Interpretation panels are progressing with panel design finalised and content for the fish barrier easement being developed. A location for the interpretation waymarker in the Braes of Glenlivet has been agreed, which is adjacent to the fish pass site.
 - d) **Scalan Mills:** Project has reached practical completion and is now in the defects stage. Some landscaping work is required to repair water damage and possibly re-seed some of the footpath sections.
 - e) **Blairfindy Castle:** Practical completion has been achieved. The site is to be landscaped in the spring and a wildflower meadow created as part of the works.
 - f) **Training and Skills:** The training project is continuing with its digital skills training classes of which 5 people regularly attend. The following courses have been delivered: 1 day and 2 day outdoor first aid courses, Needle felting for beginners and needle felting next steps, Fiddle classes are on-going and continue to be popular. Deer Stalking Certificate level 1 continue to be undertaken by local gamekeepers. The TO is currently organising a Dark Skies Workshop for local businesses.
 - g) **Oral History:** The Digital Archive is now behind schedule and is being prioritised.
 - h) **Fishing for the Future:** Additional site infrastructure is being installed and snagging undertaken on previous installed items. The LMO has been working with the fishing organisations to finalise the beat maps for the fishing leaflet.
 - i) **Community Cultural Heritage:** The CCH group have held a planning meeting for their 2020 activities and have attended an overnight visit to the National Archives of Scotland. The archives visit was to collate more information to inform the interpretation content and specifically to help them with content for the CCH Heritage Trail Booklet the group are producing.

- j) **Community Natural Heritage:** A total of 8 grant applications have been approved in 2019 totalling £12k. The last round of grants was completed in January 2020 and a total of 6 applications have been received totalling £14k. The 2020 applications are currently being reviewed.
- k) **Education:** Education contract has been awarded to Mindstretchers. The inception meeting has been held and the contractor is now contacting stakeholders as part of the information gathering phase of the contract.
- l) **Interpretation & Digital:** The area interpretation contract is now in Phase 2 with panel design complete and content development underway
- m) **Discovery Centre:** Will reopen for the 2020 season on 27th March.
- n) **Access Improvements:** Speyside Way Spur has reached practical completion and the contractor is currently undertaking snagging/defects.
- o) **Woodland Improvement:** The grant application has been submitted to Forest & Land Scotland and we are due to hear back imminently if the grant will be awarded for the 20ha native woodland planting scheme.
- p) **Dark Skies:** New light units and bulbs have been delivered and the electrician was arranged for the first round of lighting changes on tenant farms.
- q) **Landscape, Heritage & Song:** Three volunteers are working with the CHO to hold a Bothy Night at the Braes Hall in May. This will involve the fiddle classes, local schools, and will invite locals to play a tune, sing a song or recite poetry. The traditional song workshops are on-going and the next sessions being planned.

Visitor Experience:

- 7. **Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum:** SNH has brought together key partners including Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority, Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry and ourselves to look at shared outdoor access issues including promoting responsible outdoor access more consistently. While this work develops we will continue to promote 'Tread Lightly in the Cairngorms'. The 2019 social media campaign reached 308,685 accounts with 31,463 engagements. In March with Scottish Natural Heritage, Mountaineering Scotland, Ramblers Scotland and Scottish Land and estates we co-hosted a workshop with over fifty partners. Entitled 'Working Together to Protect Ground Nesting Birds' the day produced outputs designed to encourage all of us to more effectively promote responsible access to look after these birds.
- 8. **Long Distance Routes:**
 - a) **Speyside Way:** The initial study on a 20 mile extension of the Long Distance Route from Aviemore to Newtonmore started in May 2004 and after nearly 16 years of work in planning and construction the route as designated by Scottish Government is now open. Newtonmore Business Association has secured funding to create a sculpture seat start/end point to Speyside Way and we are in discussion about a formal opening at this location in the autumn. We are also signing and mapping the route and working with local communities to install information panels showing the path and nearby communities. Kingussie community has raised safety concerns about the on road section between the village and Ruthven Barracks, shared with NCN7 Cycle route, and we are meeting with Highland Council, Sustrans and Hitrans to look at ways to improve

the signage on this section. Further work in 2020, in partnership with The Highland Council and Moray Council supported by SNH will focus on improving the existing route north of Boat of Garten.

- b) **Deeside Way Extension:** The route from Aberdeen to Ballater is also promoted as NCN195 by Sustrans and in February they brought together partners; Aberdeen City and Shire Councils, Nestrans and CNPA to look at ways of improving the route and extending to Braemar. This work is ongoing and we will use this work to try and re-invigorate potential funders for the section from Braemar to Invercauld Bridge that has planning consent.
9. **Mountains and People Project:** The five year Mountains and People project within both National Parks in Scotland is now nearing completion in summer 2020. Some 89% of paths identified in Cairngorms were complete by October including the well-used and well seen Beinn a Ghlo path in Highland Perthshire opened by John Swinney in September. This project along with its predecessor, the Cairngorms Mountain Heritage Project, have upgraded 144km of key mountain paths. The focus over the next three months is completing the project and maintaining the legacy of paths and volunteers. We are also refining our partnership with Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland to ensure that paths improved in Cairngorms over the last 15 years are maintained.
10. **Active Travel:** Sustrans has now agreed in principle to support the development of the roundabout entrance to the new hospital in Aviemore being led by Highland Council and improvements to walking and access to the site being led by Hitrans. We are still trying to secure funding to take the concept design for more **Active Aviemore** to a detailed costed build design. **Glenmore** supported by the Visit Scotland managed Tourism Infrastructure Fund now has Highland Council Roads Authority permission to build a tarmac path from the beach car park to Hayfield bridge with build scheduled for Spring/Summer 2020. Once constructed Highland Council will 'adopt' the path. **Kingussie** and **Dalnain** communities have secured Sustrans support to develop costed designs for their active travel work. The Dalnain desire to create a multiuse path link to Grantown is further supported by funding from the Grantown distillery. **Laggan** has secured funding from Sustrans for a stage one work looking at options to improve active travel in and around the community.
11. **Volunteering:** The 26 trained volunteer rangers are being joined by 12 others currently undergoing training this spring. To date these volunteers have offered a total of three years of volunteering support to ten ranger services and other partners. Leader + funding for this initial development phase of volunteer rangers ends in September after which the ongoing support will be funded by us. We do not intend to train further volunteer rangers this year while we evaluate the future support required to maintain the current team.
12. **Health walks:** The sixteen health walk groups across the National Park supported 4410 walks in 2019 and the Nethy Bridge group were awarded Paths for All Dementia Friendly Accreditation.
13. **Education and Inclusion:** Cairngorms Youth Action Team launched by Mari Gougeon, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment, in October has now

recruited 15 young people, 15 -25 yrs old, to develop and support young people's involvement with the Cairngorms. We will be looking for engagement with the CNPA Board in 2020. The **John Muir Award** continues to be popular with some 2,662 mainly young people discovering, exploring, & conserving this area and then sharing their experiences in 2019. The John Muir Trust is currently undertaking a national appraisal of the award. The **Junior Ranger** programme attracted 75 young people from across the Cairngorms in 2019. **Backbone**, with support from Cairngorms National Park Authority and Scottish Natural Heritage is now delivering 'Our Natural Heritage Project' to engage with 400 people of all ages and abilities from Scotland's Refugee and Asylum Seeker and Black & Ethnic Minority communities; visiting heritage sites, undertaking conservation volunteering and the John Muir Award.

14. **Information and Interpretation: Sharing the Stories** 'A year in the Cairngorms' came to an end in November with the launch of an anthology. Some 246 people attended workshops and training sessions with 170 pupils and 17 staff taking part in school workshops. CNPA and Loch Lomond and Trossachs NPA have launched **Literary Landscapes** booklet and web presence 'unlock' the language of the land that celebrates the rich natural and cultural heritage of both National Parks. **Cateran Ecomuseum**, supported by CNPA and other partners, celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of poet and folk artist Hamish Henderson with a temporary portrait in Glenshee. It was made of jute, covered two acres of the hillside and positively launched the Ecomuseum. Work is continuing in partnership with **Ballater Halls Committee** on developing an unstaffed interpretation centre that shares the stories of the eastern Cairngorms with visitors.
15. **Snow Roads Scenic Route:** CNPA funded VisitScotland to run a Snow Roads campaign in spring 2019 to coincide with CBP's launch of the Snow Roads website and app. The campaign ran online using a mix of social media promotion and Avid native advertising. Across the campaign, there were over 5 million digital impressions. Facebook advertising was particularly successful, with over 97,000 interactions and over 17,000 landings on the Snow Roads website.
16. **Local Information Centres:** CNPA are supporting and promoting 10 Local Information Centres across the National Park and in discussion with several other communities about the opportunity to develop more. What3Words App will be actively trialled as an additional way of promoting these centres in 2020. We are also using this app and our website to actively promote the 17 **Public Toilets** in the National Park.

Rural Development:

17. **Local Development Plan 2020:** The Cairngorms National Park Local Proposed Local Development Plan was submitted to Scottish Ministers on September 20th 2019. The examination of unresolved representations by Reporters from the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) is now under way. Site inspections of the allocated sites and those promoted in representations will take place over the coming months. To date some requests for further information have been received though all have been on minor matters. We have very recently been advised that oral sessions will not be required and that the work should be complete by the end of May. At the

end of the process, the Reporter will publish an Examination Report, which will set out a list of recommended modifications to the Plan. Progress can be monitored on the DEPA's website: <http://www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk/CaseDetails.aspx?ID=120658>

18. CNPA staff are currently updating and producing new Supplementary Guidance (SG) and non-statutory guidance (NSG) to support the new Plan. The timetable for consultation is currently as follows:
 - a) April onwards: Natural Heritage NSG, Landscape Heritage NSG, Cultural Heritage NSG and Renewable Energy NSG;
 - b) May onwards: Supporting Economic Growth NSG, Sport and Recreation NSG and Resources NSG;
 - c) June onwards: Housing SG, Developer Contributions SG and Design and Place-making NSG.

19. **Planning casework:** At the January and February Planning Committee meeting, the Committee have approved a further 26 affordable housing units with 14 in Aviemore and 12 near Boat of Garten. They have also approved 27 open market flats in Aviemore and additional houses at Dulicht Court in Grantown-on-Spey. Applications for houses in woodland on the edge of Nethybridge and for prior approval of a hut in woodland near Carrbridge were refused. In March, the Committee will have determined applications recommended for approval for the continued operation of the National Park's only active landfill site near Aviemore and for an extension to the House of Bruar business near Blair Atholl. The CNPA has also called in applications for housing at Cromdale, Nethy Bridge and Kingussie, a number of tracks as planning applications and prior approval applications, and will call in an application to strengthen the funicular railway on Cairngorm. The Reporter from the Scottish Government Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals has upheld the CNPA's enforcement notice requiring an unauthorised track to be removed following an appeal against the enforcement notice.

20. **Community-led Housing Delivery:** Community Led Housing Group met in early February. Tomintoul & Glenlivet Development Trust have received £190,000 from the Scottish Land Fund to purchase to Old School site in Tomintoul. They have also received funding from CARES to undertake a feasibility study into energy efficiency measures for the site. They are about to tender for the design and build stage. The Braemar housing group have submitted an application to the Rural Housing Fund for nearly £1.5million to build for 14 units. Dulnain Bridge are progressing a feasibility study into self-build plots (funded by Highland Housing alliance), and Boat of Garten have received a RHF feasibility grant to look into 2 affordable units in the village. Ballater are currently raising funding to investigate a site within the village for two units. Peter Argyle and Murray Ferguson attended the annual Rural Housing Scotland Conference in Birnam.

21. **Economic Action Plan:** Action Plan has been updated and loaded to website. Deidre Falconer has been agreed as Chair of the Economic Steering Group and first meeting is planned for mid-April. Rural Development Officer is been recruited to assist with coordination and delivery of projects within the Plan.

22. **Cairngorm Mountain:** Consolation on the preparation a masterplan is underway and finished on 8 March. Staff attended several community consultation events and met with consultants. Recommendations are due to be presented to HIE by June. In the meantime the Funicular Railway is still out of action and work is progressing to develop the business case for repair and submit necessary application for consent including a planning application which will be called in by CNPA for determination.
23. **Tourism Action Plan:** A comprehensive paper on the Tourism Action Plan is on the agenda for Board meeting in March 2020.
24. **Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund:** The project to improve car-parking, toilets and provision for motor homes at Muir of Dinnet NNR, managed by SNH, is complete. The project in Glenmore, managed by Forest and Land Scotland, to provide new pavement/path from Beach carpark to Hayfield has yet to commence and is due to be complete by July. In Round 3 one Expression of Interest has been submitted for two small motor home parking facilities in Strathdon. A design grant has been provided to work up the Scheme for full submission in June.
25. **A9 Dualling project:** CNPA Board agreed to withdraw objection in early March following an agreement being reached with Transport Scotland who will provide offline route for cyclists and pedestrians.
26. **Badenoch Great Place Project:** The Project Officer, Oliver O'Grady, resigned in January and recruitment has been under way to replace him. It has only been possible to recruit a part time replacement, who is programmed to start work in April. The impact of this on project delivery has been mitigated to date by CNPA staff and Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey (plus the community representatives) keeping the key activities on track and the securing of a three month extension of the project such that it will now run to March 2021. A BGPP Board workshop took place in late Jan to flush out the detail of the marketing, interpretation and destination/route strategies. A contract for drone photography has been let and others for digital visualisation, storytelling and audio recording and business engagement are about to be tendered for. Planning is now underway for the 2020 Badenoch Festival which will be led by Badenoch Heritage but supported by the Project. The BGPP has secured a stand at Visit Scotland Expo and will be promoting the area as a new cultural heritage destination within the Park.

Stakeholder Engagement:

27. The CEO met with the following organisations and individuals since the last board meeting; NHS Highland, CaMPA, Scottish Land Commission, Cairngorms Connect, RSPB, Transport Scotland, Edward Mountain MSP, Kate Forbes MSP, Scottish Government Peatlands team, Community Councils.
28. The CEO has attended the following events and meetings: Joint CNPA, LLTTNPA & SNH Management Team meeting, Committee on Climate Change, Net Zero Land Use Report, Scottish Land Commission Strategic Plan event, NHLF Heritage Horizons, Cairngorm Mountain Masterplan, Environment and Economy Leaders Group, Climate

Ready Aberdeenshire, COP26 Workshop, SG Biodiversity Programme Advisory Group

29. The CEO also spoke at the Cross Party Rural Group on Land Use & Planning, Climate Change Conference & Volunteer Ranger Training Day

Communications:

30. **Cairngorms Nature Campaign:** The Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend will take place 15-18 May and the programme will be launched at the end of March. Over 80 events are planned aimed at people who are new to nature, nature enthusiasts and specialists as well as volunteering and inclusion events. There will also be the usual School Arts competition and the Rural Skills day will take place on 8th June 2020.
31. **Make It Yours Campaign:** Awaiting the new visitor survey data we have not been actively promoting the training but are still receiving and responding to requests. Attendees are reaching 400 since the start of the programme equating to nearly 2% of the population of the Cairngorms National Park. The training has been updated to include Badenoch Great Place and Tomintoul and Glenlivet Dark Skies.
32. **Active Cairngorms:** Wee Walks Week in September 2019 was successful in promoting walks on social media; posts reached an audience of 180,572 throughout September – an increase of 61% from 2018 and 38% from 2017.
33. **Corporate Communications:** A Climate Change conference took place on 9th March with Cabinet Secretary Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Chris Stark CEO of the Committee on Climate Change, Dr Mike Rivington and Professor Alison Hester from the James Hutton Institute speaking. We are expecting 180 delegates and the afternoon will focus on Land Use, Biodiversity Loss, Sustainable Communities & Business and Transport & Active Travel in the Park.

Organisational Development:

34. **Office Extension Project:** We are developing plans to upgrade the meeting and social space in the old building. We are also reviewing the possibility of improving cycle storage facilities to promote active travel to work.
35. **Staffing update:** Since November, staffing updates are as follows:
- a) Lynn Cassells resigned from her post as TGLP Land Management Officer. This was a part time (15 hours/week), fixed term post. Jos Milner, who currently works for the CNPA as the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership Officer, was successfully recruited to this post.
 - b) Katherine Donnachie resigned from her post as Planning Officer. Recruitment to this post was not successful, neither was our attempt to fill the post with a temp. As a result we are focussing on graduate level posts and are currently recruiting a Graduate Planner.
 - c) Tom Cole was appointed to the Seasonal Ranger post and joined us in February. This is a fixed term contract to the end of September.

36. **Youth Employment:**
- a) **Internships:** We have appointed three interns – Cameron Cosgrove who joined us in November to digitise unmapped woodland and trees in the Cairngorms National Park; Bruce MacDonald who joined us in January to collate research for a project bringing Gaelic Heritage to life for non-Gaelic speakers; and Peter Green who joined us in January to identify and digitise eroding and drained peatland. These short term internships have proven to be a successful model for the completion of specific, time-bound projects and also support the development of supervision and management skills of existing staff.
 - b) **Work Experience:** We are supporting a young person from Grantown Grammar who joined us on an initial 10-day placement in December, helping her to understand the role of the Authority, the various jobs and career paths to those jobs, and general working in a corporate environment. This has proven to be a positive experience for the young person and we are extending the opportunity until the end of the current academic year.
 - c) We are working in partnership with UHI and Kingussie High School to support a Foundation Apprentice – this involves a work placement for a youngster still at school, working for the organisation one day/week during term time. The placement will help them achieve their SVQ qualification in business administration.
37. **Shared Services:** Continued work to provide HR support the Scottish Land Commission has included the development of new policies, the development, staff consultation and submission of the 2019/20 pay remit, which has recently been approved and implemented.
38. **Organisational Development Strategy 3:** ODS3 has now commenced. All working groups have met, and a draft action plan has been developed. The Best Companies Survey was completed in October, and CNPA has been identified as a 1-star organisation for staff engagement. This is a positive result and only the second time since we started doing the survey in 2020 that we have been recognised as a 1-star organisation. We have also been listed at *** out of the top 100 companies in the “not-for-profit” sector. The very detailed results of this survey are still being analysed and consulted with staff and will feed in to the overarching ODS.
39. **Family Friendly Awards:** CNPA has been selected as a finalist in the ‘Mental Health & Wellbeing’ category of the Top Employer Awards 2020. The awards ceremony are being held on 26th March.

Grant Moir
March 2020

Board Member Updates

Peter Argyle

I was pleased to be able to attend, along with Murray, the Rural Housing Scotland (RHS) Conference in Birnam on 28th February. The theme was “Rural Vision” and the event was well-attended. RHS have supported 24 communities in 10 local authority areas with housing projects as well as making an input to policy development. Projects within the CNP include Braemar and Ballater, while Blairgowrie is close.

The key-note address was from Lesley Riddoch. Ms Riddoch was followed by Andrew Copus, a senior researcher on demography, JHI and a European university, who gave an interesting presentation on changing demography in Scotland and sparsely populated areas in particular. Such populations, especially working age, will decline and migration is not entirely the solution. The net effect of migration in cities is roughly zero whilst the impact in rural areas of migration from outwith the UK or RUK is pretty small. The population in rural areas is growing slowly but not in sparsely populated areas or the islands.

There was a presentation on the island of Ulbha (off the W coast of Mull) which was subject to a community purchase, with £4.4m from the SLF although this also included land on Mull itself. Ulbha is mostly moorland, connected by ferry to Mull, population (f/t) is six with between 5/6000 visitors pa. The population was 600 in the early c19th. The strategy is to use public funds to renovate 6 residential properties; seven sites have been identified for new-build but on an island with limited access from another island with access issues and with no metalled roads, this is not without its challenges. The aim is to grow the population to 50 within 20 years but it was not clear what employment opportunities would be created or what would be done around education and other services. There is a project (estimated at £1.4m) to develop the laird’s house as a heritage centre with self-catering accommodation. Also plan to develop agriculture on the island – currently 35 highland cattle and some sheep. The presentation raised some questions for me but which – as noted below – I was unable to air...

A number of presentations followed on financing community projects, on energy efficiency and community-led housing projects, the latter focussing on work on Arran. Scottish Land & Estates CEO Sarah Jane Laing spoke about the supply of affordable housing and the importance of the private sector in this, particularly referencing Andrew Bradford of Kincardine Estate. She also mentioned the community project at Rothiemurches (which was welcome) but commented in that context “the planners were afraid of innovation” (which was not) in their dealing with the application. David Stewart from the Scottish Land Commission spoke about the need for further land reform, access to land and the need for policy and legislative change.

The final session - a panel Q&A – was abandoned as by this point it was snowing and the spectacle of around 2cm of wet snow sitting on the ground caused some to leave in haste, whilst more hardy souls remained to the end of the session (without Q&A). Those who had travelled by train did not have any option. As it happened the snow-belt extended not more than 5 miles from Birnam.

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Formal Board Paper I 27th March 2020

An interesting conference in general and some good conversations around the main sessions. Murray and I were able to have a helpful dialogue with some folk from the Scottish Government about some of the issues we face in the CNP and pointed out that the Park is an ideal place to pilot new initiatives. There was perhaps a slight sense that “Rural Scotland” is mostly the western part of the country north of Glasgow and the islands off the west coast but there were occasional references to other parts.

Judith Webb

I attended the Cairngorms Nature Steering group and have been keeping updated with both Andy Ford and Lucy Ford on progress with Heritage Horizons and the Big Weekend respectively.

I chaired a CUAG meeting which was extremely well attended and had some very useful presentations from Cairngorms Connect, Dee Fisheries Trust and East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership (ECMP) along with some discussion on Hill Tracks, Werritty and the Deer report these reports will continue to be part of our Cairngorms Upland Action Group (CUAG) discussions going forward.