

---

CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

---

**Title:** Evaluation of Outdoor Access Annual Event

**Prepared by:** Fran Potheary – Outdoor Access Officer

**Purpose**

The purpose of the paper is to feedback the comments received from the public on the success of the Annual Event and reflect on how the event might be structured in future.

**Advice sought**

The Forum is invited to consider the comments made and advise on the structure and contents of future events.

**Background**

39 members of the public attended the event on the 30 September 2007 and there were approximately 25 Forum members and staff who also attended. Feedback was received from 23 people. What follows is a summary of all the positive and negative comments received, and suggestions for change.

**Positive Feedback**

- a) It was very well organised (there was no criticism of the location, venue, layout, catering and structure of the day)
- b) The speaker was brilliant
- c) The walk and talk sessions were interesting and informative
- d) It was a good opportunity to ask questions of relevant people
- e) It was a good way of networking and engaging interest groups
- f) There was a good mixture of presentation, discussion, activity and fun
- g) There was enough flexibility in the event to allow people to come and go
- h) It was good to see Forum members sitting amongst the participants
- i) It was a good opportunity for the Forum and Park Authority to get feedback from the public
- j) Overall it was educational, informative, well conducted and fun!

**Negative Feedback**

- a) The timings in the morning were 'out' (the morning question time over-ran considerably)
- b) There could have been better use made of the roving microphones
- c) The keynote speaker was not relevant to the topic of the event (one comment)
- d) Forum members on the panel were 'exposed' to difficult questions

**Suggestions for change**

- a) The day should be shorter

- b) It is desirable to avoid Sundays and in particular Sunday morning which clashes with church
- c) There should have been more time for Q&A's
- d) There could have been transport laid on to and from event e.g. from Aberdeen
- e) There could be activities laid on (particularly family orientated ones)
- f) The event should be in Deeside/Braemar next year
- g) A 'harder' sell in terms of advertising might have attracted a new audience
- h) There could be follow up sessions after practical sessions
- i) Forum members should be introduced at the meeting but not individually
- j) Specific mention was made of more time to explore access legislation in respect of core paths and to discuss the funicular (each suggestion from one person)

### **Staff Reflections on the Event**

CNPA staff have further reflected on the event and come to the following conclusions.

- a) There was no doubt that the event was more successful than last years in terms of numbers, organisation and subject matter and this was reflected in the feedback received. The speaker, although his subject matter did not touch on the National Park, attracted some people who would not otherwise have come. He was very interesting and engendered an excellent atmosphere and positive frame of mind which reached forward into the meeting.
- b) It was felt that there was a 'lost opportunity' for the audience to hear more from the Convenor as a 'mouth piece' for the Forum. We should consider having an outside facilitator or use a CNPA Board member to chair the event.
- c) The question time was useful but it was obvious there were more questions and need for discussion than time allowed for.
- d) It would be useful if we could have given more practical and real examples of where the Forum has helped resolve issues – to further reinforce people's understanding of the role of the Forum in relation to the Park Authority.
- e) The theme of the event as "outdoor access" is very general and was originally chosen to allow a broad range of interested parties to turn up. However we believe that a more tightly 'themed' event may attract more specifically focused interest groups, and potentially more people.
- f) There was clearly an appreciation of the opportunity to get out and about. We feel that we should make more provision for young people next time at the points of the day when the adults are engaged in debate and discussion. Whilst more focused "outdoor activity" or "come and try it" sessions would no doubt prove popular, we need to balance this against the greater logistical requirements and the resources to organize this. For example it is likely if we were to go down this lines that we would need to contract in an Adventure Activity Licensed provider, which would have significant cost implications.
- g) In total, the event cost about £2500 of which £600 was catering; £670 for the speaker plus expenses and £1200 for the advertising. Around 600 people received invitations personally by email or letter, and advertisements were placed in the local papers throughout the Park for period of two weeks. This represents high spend per capita.

**Fran Potheary**  
**Outdoor Access Officer**  
[franpotheary@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:franpotheary@cairngorms.co.uk)