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## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR DISCUSSION

**Title: CAIRNGORMS VISITOR MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

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#### **Purpose**

1. This is the end of season review looking at the visitor management work that has been undertaken in the Park this summer and also looking at the work to be done this winter.

#### **Overview**

2. The Cairngorms National Park Authority has been working with partners across the National Park since spring. There was a weekly visitor management meeting chaired by the CEO of the CNPA with land managers, public bodies, Local Authorities, tourism groups, representative bodies and Police Scotland. A full list of the membership is included in **Annex I**.
3. The Cairngorms Tourism Emergency Response Group also met weekly to address issues around the reopening of tourism. This group has been chaired by CNPA Board Member Janet Hunter and includes tourism groups, local authorities, and Visit Scotland. The membership is again in **Annex I**.
4. There has also been significant work at a national level and the CEO now sits on the national Visitor Management Steering Group and co-chairs the Investment/Infrastructure sub-group with the CEO of LLTTNPA. CNPA are also represented on the communications, enforcement and operational sub-groups.
5. A Season Review meeting was held on 28<sup>th</sup> October and this paper sets out the work review work as well as the work that is being undertaken this winter.

6. It is worth acknowledging as we review and look to the future all the visitor management efforts by a range of partners in these unprecedented times and that the coordinated efforts have gone a long way to limit the impacts across the National Park.

**Planning**

7. The CNPA, with input from a range of partners, produced a [visitor management plan](#) for the Cairngorms as a whole and specific plans for Glenmore and Deeside. This allowed us to try and ensure that the right solutions were in place to deal with the anticipated demand for access to the Park when lockdown was eased.

	What worked	Work for 2021 (Easter)
Visitor Management Plans	Gave a good focus for the work and made sure that everyone was bought in to the actions undertaken.  Good information collated from land managers across the summer.	Will revamp VMP's during this winter for Deeside, Glenmore and create a new one for Angus Glens. Still within overall CNP framework VMP.
Cairngorms Together development	This gave an excellent focus to the communications work and also ensured good buy-in from residents, businesses, councilors etc.	CBP and CNPA to continue to work to refine messages with partners and ensure we have agreed approach in place for start of next season.
Visitor Management Group	The overall VMG worked very well, was well attended and made communication and coordination as easy as could be.	Continue with VMG during the winter but on a monthly basis and set up sub-groups on the specific work in areas covered by sub-plans.

**Communications Approach**

8. The [#CairngormsTogether](#) approach was developed by CBP, CNPA and others to ensure a consistent approach to communications – Know the Guidelines, Plan Ahead, Be Flexible, Be Kind. This has been used consistently by all the partners in the Park to deliver clear, consistent and positive messages for visitors and residents.
9. The CBP with support from the CNPA held a number of meetings with businesses and others to ensure buy-in to the development of the approach.

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**  
**Formal Board Paper 3 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Communications**

	What worked	Key Issues to address for 2021
Access Messages	<p>As the Access Authority the CNPA has been very clear on messages around fires, bbq's, litter and camping.</p> <p>Resources such as posters and infographics were well received.</p>	<p>Need to ensure that we get consistency with national and regional messaging and that those messages are positive, consistent, clear and concise</p> <p>Small access comms sub-group for 2020 to be set up. CNPA, CBP, VisitAberdeenshire, SLE to develop agreed messages in advance of the season building on Tread Lightly and national messaging.</p> <p>Need to ensure access messages and standard operating procedures at key hot spots align.</p>
Website Information	<p>CNPA has had Covid specific pages + information on what car parks and toilets were open.</p> <p>CBP had a specific website setting out what businesses were open and relevant information. Very good website.</p>	<p>Potential to look at real-time information for what car parks are open and how busy they are.</p> <p>Look to develop website copy that can be shared across partner's websites.</p>
Signage	<p>CNP signage at lots of location in the Park. Welcomed by land managers.</p>	<p>Agree suite of signage for next season during the winter season.</p>
Social Media (see Annex 2 for info)	<p>The CNPA, CBP, VisitAberdeenshire and many others have been putting out significant messages around visitor management throughout the summer. This includes films, vlogs &amp; blogs across all social media platforms linked to the</p>	<p>Continue to look at how the local messaging fits within the work at a national level.</p> <p>Ensure consistency across the Park of messages and audiences.</p>

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**  
**Formal Board Paper 3 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

	#CairngormsTogether approach and interviews on radio and TV. There has been significant work to target 1 <sup>st</sup> time visitors and specifically the 18 -30 year old, audience including purchasing adverts on social media aimed at a younger visitor	Need to use the visitor survey information to also inform decisions.  Develop plans for local messaging that reaches out to residents.  Continue to promote community paths as safe enjoyable experiences encouraging people to enjoy a wider variety of places than the key hotspots.
Community Engagement	Zoom meetings were also held by CNPA & CBP with community councils, local authority councilors and residents in June and again in late August to share information, listen to local concerns, and develop a consistent approach to safely welcoming visitors. Zoom meetings were also held with SLE members in the Park and North-East on three occasions as well.	Further community engagement during the winter to keep people up to speed and also ensure that any proposed changes are well trailed.

**Rangers, Seasonal Rangers & Police**

10. Boots on the ground has been a critical part of the work done this summer by a range of different organisations across the Park.

	What worked	Key Issues to address for 2021
CNPA Seasonal Rangers (see Annex 3 for info)	During lockdown CNPA hired nine seasonal rangers to help manage visitors at evenings and weekends across the Park and to supplement the existing ranger services in the Park. Lots of great feedback from residents and land managers.	The CNPA is looking at its management structure around CNPA ranger services for Spring 2021. CNPA keeping on 2 rangers during the winter to help liaison and development of approach for 2021. (see Annex 4)  In partnership with existing Ranger Services and land

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**  
**Formal Board Paper 3 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

	<p>There were some comms issues between estate based services and seasonal rangers. Most of these were rectified but some will need addressing this winter.</p>	<p>managers develop standard operating procedures.</p> <p>Look at a joint rota between estate-based services and CNPA rangers so that we all know who is doing what and where there are gaps to plug especially in areas without an estate based service. Link closely to communities.</p>
<p>Estate based services</p>	<p>There has been good collaborative working across the Park between existing ranger services and the CNPA seasonals. Forestry &amp; Land Scotland also appointed additional weekend staff to engage with visitors at Glenmore over weekends in August.</p>	<p>Still a need to increase the 'Team Cairngorms' approach between existing estate-based ranger services and CNPA seasonals.</p> <p>Link in with the visitor management meetings being set up.</p> <p>Ensure that existing staff within organisations and estates that have a visitor facing role are included in the "Team Cairngorms" approach.</p> <p>In partnership with existing Ranger Services develop training modules for seasonals and other staff on visitor management and engagement.</p>
<p>Police Service</p>	<p>Police Scotland have been stretched during Covid but have been responsive to call-outs across the Park on visitor management issues. Good communication with Police on the west side of the Park, less so with East side.</p>	<p>Meeting with Police on both sides of the Park to discuss season 2021 and key contact points and lead officers such as wildlife crime.</p> <p>In partnership with Police Scotland ensure police officers are fully aware of visitor management requirements and expectations.</p>

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**  
**Formal Board Paper 3 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

Fire Service	Good work on practical fire action e.g. putting out fires at Loch Morlich	Need to set up a more strategic approach to contacts and approach across the Park.

11. **Infrastructure** – The partners all moved quickly to get toilets and car parks open for the start of phase 3 in July and information was made available on the CNPA website about what [toilets](#) and [car parks](#) were open. Funding was also provided for temporary toilets at Linn of Dee.

	What worked	Key Issues to address for 2021
Toilets	Most toilets opened very quickly across the Park.	Key issues is cost and ensuring that the capacity is in place if we have increased visitor numbers.
Campervans	Definitely a key issue. FLS trialled some sites for overnight stays.	CBP funded through the CNPA Green Recovery Fund to help address this issue.  Need to increase capacity and waste disposal points.
Camping	This is a key issue and was focused on in messages and by rangers across the Park. In general people behaved themselves but through mainly ignorance a number of issues arose around waste, fire etc.	Potential to look at more informal campsites at key places.  Continue messaging and boots on the ground.  Need to ensure that formal campsites are open (especially Glenmore)
Litter	Skip was placed in Glenmore car park early to help. Messaging has been generally consistent. More to do on this.	Work with the national Visitor Management Group to agree consistent approach to litter messaging and ensure lead agencies play their part.
Path Infrastructure	Increased usage and covid restrictions on maintenance led to some issues early in the summer. This increase is shown on the Old Logging Way in Aug 2020 it had its largest ever use	Likely to be continued high usage of paths across the Park. Need to ensure that collectively there is the right investment in path maintenance. Investment is being made in key locations e.g., Glenmore path improvements. .

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**  
**Formal Board Paper 3 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

	with 13,300 uses of which 87% were cycling	
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12. **Traffic Management** – The amount of cars coming into the Park has caused issues at six main locations; Glenmore, Muir of Dinnet, Linn of Dee, Glen Muick, Glen Tanar and Glen Clova with other smaller ‘hot spots’.

	What worked	Key Issues to address for 2021
Traffic Management	The CNPA has worked with estates and local authorities to put in solutions including variable message speed limits at Glenmore, road traffic order at Glen Muick & similar approach at Linn of Dee , parking bollards at a number of locations including Glenmore, Loch Insh and Achlean.	As part of VMP discussion organise specific meetings on traffic management with Local Authorities, Police and relevant estates to establish approach for 2021 based on what worked.  Including “event” management for example marshals during busy weekends.  Look at infrastructure options e.g. bunding to stop roadside parking and formalising temporary approaches for 2021 e.g. speed limits.  Potential to have Traffic Orders in place to use when needed.
Overflow car parks	Overflow car parks were provided at GlenTanar and Linn of Dee	Potential to have more of these for next season in key places. Identify through VMPs.
Variable Signs	4 variable signs have been in place. 2 in Deeside, 1 in Glenshee and 1 in Glenmore	Need to look at locations for next year and size of signs. Potential to look at permanent option for Glenmore.

**Next Steps**

13. The Visitor Management Group has agreed to work on producing further iterations of the visitor management plans. Meetings have been set up with key partners in Glenmore/Strathspey, Deeside and Angus Glens for November/December to look at the key issues and the investment needed for 2021.

14. The Communications Sub-Group meeting is also being set up as per the season review.
15. The Visitor Management Group as a whole is going to go to monthly meetings during the winter period and then start to ramp up again in March 2021 as we approach Easter.
16. The work and feedback from this summer has given us an excellent understanding of what worked, what didn't work and the sorts of investment that we all collectively will need to make. The work that the CNPA is feeding into a national level will also help deliver an improved approach but some of the infrastructure improvements may take a bit of time to deliver and not everything can be done by the start of the 2021 season.
17. The CNPA are developing the plans for a CNPA Ranger Service that will complement existing ranger services in the Park and will include this in the management restructure the CNPA is currently undertaking and will look at the final shape of this post the Scottish Government budget and the CNPA Grant-in-aid for 2021/22.
18. Finally, it is worth stating that the co-ordination and genuine partnership working across organisations at a Park level has been fantastic. Where things have gone wrong we have adapted and addressed the issues and the approach taken stands us in good stead for the future and has been used as a template for other areas.
19. Within the Park Authority as well as the frontline support indicated in this paper there has been fantastic corporate support from HR to recruit and support the ranger team, communications work 7 days a week, all the risk assessment work and the support from the visitor services team across all these work areas. None of it would have been achieved without that support.

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**November 2020**

## **Annex I Key CNP Visitor Management & Tourism Groups**

### **Visitor Management Group**

**Chair** Grant Moir CNPA

Cairngorms Business Partnership  
Visit Aberdeenshire  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Highland Council  
Police Scotland  
Scottish Land & Estates  
RSPB Abernethy  
Mar Lodge Estate NTS  
Cairngorm Mountain

Atholl Estate  
Rothiemurchus Estate  
Balmoral Estate  
Glen Tanar Estate  
Forestry and Land Scotland  
NatureScot  
Highlands & Islands Enterprise  
Angus Alive

### **Tourism Emergency Response Group**

**Chair** Janet Hunter CNPA

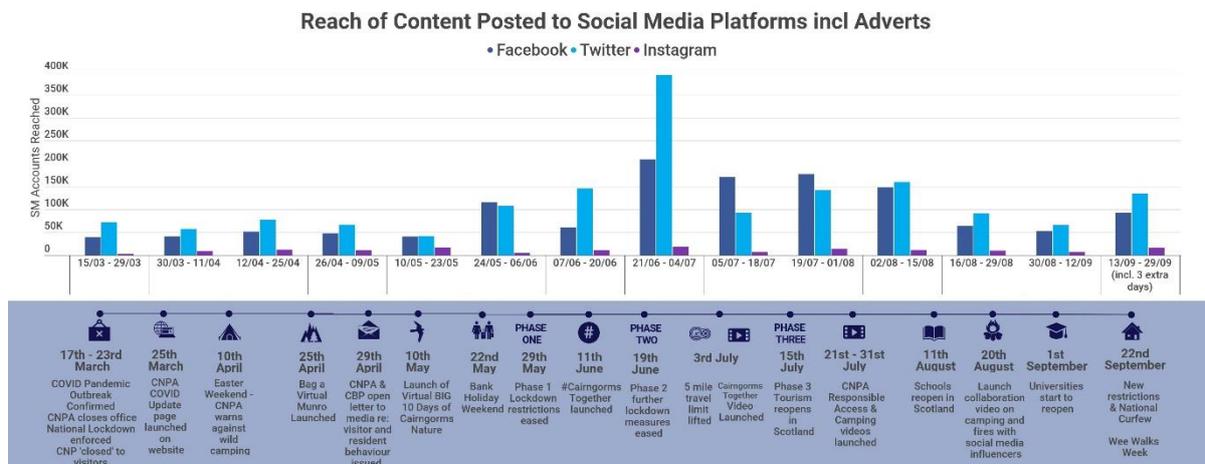
Cairngorms Business Partnership  
Visit Aberdeenshire  
Moray Speyside  
Highland Council

Aberdeenshire Council  
Visit Scotland  
Highland & Islands Enterprise  
Angus Alive

## Annex 2 Summary of Digital Communications Engagement with Coronavirus Guidance & Visitor Management Messages

### Data Observations

- With the first phase of easing of restrictions (29<sup>th</sup> May) we saw a major increase in our digital communications reach and from the second phase (19<sup>th</sup> June) we saw the largest increase in our reach and engagement. From the 15<sup>th</sup> July when tourism resumed in Scotland our digital channels have maintained high levels and engagement throughout the summer – visits to the website increased by 47% compared to the same period in 2019.



- From March to September, we published 904 posts to CNPA Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, reaching 3.1 million accounts, attracting 5,053 new followers – doubling some of our more local audiences.
- Our posts using #CairngormsTogether reached 1.3 million users on social media.
- Our Visitor Management, COVID, Stay Safe and Outdoor Access posts reached 1.8 million users on social media.
- The Spirit of the Cairngorms responsible access video we made in partnership with 3 social media influencers and the RSPB generated 179,000 views in a month.
- 20,605 people liked, commented and shared our Physical Distancing Highland Cow posts – promoting the 2 metre stay safe message.
- We saw a 215% increase in people aged 18-24 years in Scotland visiting the website during lockdown.
- We ran a series of Google Adverts promoting responsible access around camping, littering and visiting the park for 56 days which generated 71,200 ad impressions and 6,900 clicks through to our website via the search engine.

For a more in-depth analysis please visit: <https://bit.ly/38eIXVy>

**Annex 3 Summary of CNPA Seasonal Ranger Engagement with Visitors 29 July – 30 October**

<b>Location</b>	<b>No of people spoken (excluding campers)</b>	<b>No of campers (tents) spoken with</b>	<b>No of campers (campervans) spoken with</b>	<b>No of fires tackled</b>	<b>No of bags of litter</b>	<b>No of Incidents of Fly tipping</b>
STRATHSPEY	1147	43	60	57	44.5	17
BADENOCH	149	10	9	26	37.7	6
DEESIDE EAST OF BALLATER	650	26	13	36	27.45	1
DEESIDE WEST OF BALLATER	516	185	54	49	31.25	0
GLENMORE & ROTHMURCHUS	2785	696	84	144	81.2	11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5247</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>35</b>

1. Key 'hot spots' Deeside - **Muir of Dinnet, Glen Tanar, Loch Muich, Linn of Dee &**, latterly, **Clunie Flats**
2. Key 'hot spots' Badenoch & Strathspey – **Glenmore**

Improved traffic and road management, increased signage and consistent messaging across the park has helped enormously in getting the message about responsible behaviour to the visitors. Where capacity has allowed work has included communities & has expanded on request with inputs to **Tomintoul, Achlean, & Laggan**

## **Annex 4 - CNPA Ranger Service**

The CNPA is looking to the establishment a permanent CNPA Ranger Service. This will complement existing ranger structures in the CNP and will not replace them or the CNPA grant support for them. The CNPA Rangers have the benefit of being flexible across the Park and will look to establish close working relationships with residents, communities and land managers. The information below sets out at a high level the sorts of work the Rangers will get involved in across the year although it will not be as rigid as the time allocations below.

- 1) Visitor Management from Easter to September
  - a. Key sites, patrolling & messages (especially those areas without estate-based services)
  - b. Engagement with existing estate-based ranger services
  - c. Engagement with visitors and communities
  
- 2) October to March
  - a. Outdoor Learning (JMA's, Junior Rangers etc.)
  - b. Nature – supporting cairngorms nature partnership
  - c. Health – support health walks
  - d. Maintenance – Ensure infrastructure managed by CNPA in good condition.