

Information Update 28.03.07

Prepared by: CNPA Officers

Purpose: To update the ViSIT Forum on relevant projects

1. National Park Plan Update

On 15th March Sarah Boyack, Deputy Minister for the Environment and Rural Development announced the approval of the Cairngorms National Park Plan which means we can begin to collectively implement the plan from the beginning of April. Over the next few weeks CNPA will publish and distribute the approved plan and agree who should be involved in the seven delivery teams, three advisory forums and the strategic advisory panel. In the meantime, can you pass on the message that the plan has been approved and that the final plan and supporting materials are available on the CNPA website at www.cairngorms.co.uk.

2. Association of Cairngorms Community Council

The prime objective of the current Association of Cairngorms Community Councils is to promote and represent the shared interests of the Community Councils and the communities they represent. The 2007 – 2008 Project will retain this prime objective, but the members have agreed that the next stage of development should be directed at widening the membership base of the Association to incorporate the range of sectors in communities, as well as Community Councils. The aim will be eventually to create an organisation which genuinely represents communities, and effectively impacts on the decision making of public agencies and other organisations. It will be a source of well-informed community representatives, a powerful voice for all community sectors, a mechanism for communities and individuals who wish to raise a wide variety of issues, and the initial community contact for all agencies. Contact AofCCC@aol.com for further details.

3. Cairngorms Connections Online

The development on the course is nearing completion and will shortly be piloted. When launched, the course will be available from Tourist Board Training on CD, or online through the learndirect network. There will be no charge for participants. Contact heathergalbraith@cairngorms.co.uk for further details.

4. Visitor Information Review

Following discussion at the last ViSIT Forum meeting progress has been slower than expected due to other pressure of work. The next phase is to invite feedback from frontline staff and present findings to next meeting of ViSIT Forum. Contact murrayferguson@cairngorms.co.uk

5. Green Tourism Business Scheme

In 2005/ 06, 7 GTBS seminars were organised in the Cairngorms with 85 businesses attending. Follow-up assessments are still ongoing, but at least 60 new businesses have signed up to the scheme in the last year. The seminars were supported with funds from VisitScotland which ceased in December 2006. CNPA are keen to continue support for the scheme in some form, perhaps working with local business associations. Contact heathergalbraith@cairngorms.co.uk for further information.

6. CNPA Directly-Elected Board Members

The election results for the 5 directly-elected members of the CNPA board were announced on Thursday 15th May. The successful candidates were:

Ward 1. Andrew Rafferty

Ward 2. Willie McKenna

Ward 3. Mary McCafferty

Ward 4. Eleanor Mackintosh

Ward 5. Geva Blackett

7. Organised Outdoor Access Events

A policy on organised outdoor access events in the Park has now been approved by the CNPA Board as part of the Outdoor Access Strategy. The Strategy will now be printed and circulated to interested parties. The Policy refers to specific guidelines that will be developed and kept up to date for outdoor access event organisers and land managers, complementing the national guidance already available in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Plans are now being made about how to take that work forwards. Contact bobgrant@cairngorms.co.uk

8. Interpretation in the Cairngorms

CNPA invited a wide range of partners to a meeting in early February to look at ways in which interpretation can be better coordinated, and how we can collectively take forward actions identified in the National Park Plan. It was agreed that guidance should be produced to describe the distinctive characteristics of the National Park which will help people recognise how they are part of it and inspire them to tell its stories. Contact andyford@cairngorms.co.uk.

9. Core Path Plan

The next phase of consultation on the preparation of the Plan will take place between April and June. Detailed maps will be available of the proposed core paths. CNPA would like to hear views on whether the network is sufficient to give people reasonable access throughout the area. Contact sandramiddleton@cairngorms.co.uk

10. Heather Hopper

Subject to confirmation of funding, the Heather Hopper will run in 2007 from 9th May to 30th September 7 days a week with 2 buses leaving around 10am from GoS and Ballater and crossing over, effectively twice a day service from both start points. Unfortunately it will be non-DDA (disabled) compliant and is unlikely to carry cycles. Contact johnthorne@cairngorms.co.uk for further details.

11. Aviemore & the Cairngorms Destination Management Ltd

ACDM have appointed a new Chief Executive, Alan Rankin, currently Chief Executive of the Scottish Tourism Forum. He will begin work for ACDM in May 2007.

12. Cairngorms Brand

The Brand paper previously circulated to the ViSIT Forum was approved by the CNPA Board in February. The update on progress was noted and recommendation that the Brand be used more widely than the CNPA corporate logo was agreed. Contact fionamilligan@cairngorms.co.uk

13. Cairngorms on a Shoestring

This is the working title of a project aimed at promoting experiences in the Park for people on low incomes. Elma McMenemy has been commissioned to audit provision for this group and prepare a suite of itineraries. Workshops will be held late March to obtain views of low income groups and further discussion on how the itineraries will be promoted will be part of phase two of the project. Contact Christaylor@cairngorms.co.uk

14. Ranger Services

At its meeting in March the CNPA Board approved the next stage in the work toward developing a more co-ordinated approach to rangers in the National Park. This included approving:-

- Detailed negotiations with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to transfer the discretionary grant for rangers, and the administrative costs, to CNPA.
- Discussions with Local Authorities to develop ways of working that allowed CNPA more day to day influence over rangers work programmes particularly in relation to work on outdoor access.
- Progress the development of a visual image, using the National Park Brand, that clearly links Ranger Services to the National Park.

Any changes to the management and grant aid of rangers will require the approval of SNH, ranger services managers and CNPA Board. We anticipate that significant changes will take 12-18 months to implement. Contact petercrane@cairngorms.co.uk for further information.

15. John Muir Award

Partnership funding from Scottish Natural Heritage and Leader + for this project ends in October 2007. We will be presenting a paper to the CNPA board in April that outlines options for continuing the delivery of the Award in the Cairngorms. Delivery of the Award is an action in the National Park Plan (*Extend the use of the John Muir Award to encourage more people to experience a sense of wildness in the Park and to share their experiences*) and by undertaking the Award young people can also directly contribute to other actions in the Plan. We are also looking at ways of linking the award to a Junior Ranger scheme based on a Europarc model where young people can act as ambassadors for the National Park. Contact alansmith@cairngorms.co.uk for further information.

16. Point of Entry Marker Project

The four granite markers for the trunk road sites are currently being manufactured by Fyfe Glenrock at Oldmeldrum. Ian White Associates Landscape Architects are preparing detailed designs for the installation sites and their immediate surrounds. We have not yet appointed an installation contractor but anticipate that installation will start in June. Contact petercrane@cairngorms.co.uk for further information.

17. Outsider Festival

The Outsider Festival is a key element of the Scottish Year of Highland Culture. Unique Events have been commissioned to deliver the opening, closing and 'middle' events for 2007 and the Outsider, held in Rothiemurchus on 22-24 June is part of this suite. The event aims to be a festival with a difference, sourcing organic and fair trade food for example. In addition to music stages, the programme offers: film; comedy and debate; Merida Outsider Mountain Bike event; Britain's Most Beautiful Run; wildlife walks; gorge walking; rafting; canoeing and astronomy. CNPA are keen to be supportive and are negotiating support at present. Contact christaylor@cairngorms.co.uk.