

Annex 2: Communications & Engagement Progress Report 2018

Make It Yours Campaign

Outcome - Business/communities promote the Park, deliver a better visitor/customer experience and benefit from the Park brand

Agreed targets 2018/19:

- MIY presentations to 100 visitor facing staff each year
- Increase in Brand Charter users by 10% Year on Year (Target 163 & 220 by 2022)
- A visitor giving scheme is trialled in support of two community projects

Programme of Engagement – ‘Make it Yours’ interactive presentation

The CNPA is continuing with its successful 1hr ‘Make it Yours’ interactive training session for visitor facing staff which started in 2016. The session is particularly beneficial to new and seasonal employees and introduces them to what is special about the National Park and what our visitors are most interested in (based on the results of the 2014/15 [Visitor Survey](#)). During 2018, 91 visitor facing staff attended a MIY presentation at:

- Volunteer Rangers Welcome Day
- Glenlivet Distillery
- Nethybridge Hotel
- Explore Abernethy
- Nethy House & Café
- Wilderness Scotland
- Ballater Business Association
- Outdoor Activity Providers Group
- Coylumbridge Hilton

A more detailed learning experience, alongside the one hour presentations, for tourism businesses has also been developed. This 1 day session was successfully trialled with an outdoor activity provider in early April 2018 and we are considering how to take this forward given our available resources. The MIY training continues to be well received and 100% of businesses would welcome the CNPA back in future years. Planned MIY sessions for 2019 include:

- RSPB Osprey Centre
- Heather Centre
- VisitScotland VICs (Aviemore & Ballater) and other Local Information Centres (LICs)
- Braemar & Badenoch focused events (to be confirmed with the local communities)
- New & existing CNPA board members

Tear-off Map pads

Tear-off map pads, sponsored in 2017 by Ellis Brigham Mountain Sports, continue to be extremely well received by tourism businesses, VICs and Ranger bases around the Park. In an online survey, out of 42 respondents of businesses that took delivery of map pads, 98% used them and 93% of businesses would like to continue to use them if they are available. During 2018, over 30,000 maps were passed on to National Park visitors. Ellis Brigham

Mountain Sports has offered to sponsor the map pads again in 2018/19 and these have gone to print for distribution in time for the start of the 2019 tourist season.

Marketing

It was agreed by CNPA and partners that the 2017/18 marketing budget of £20k including VAT would be spent on the promotion of the eastern Cairngorms using the focus of the Snow Roads scenic route by VisitScotland's marketing team. This work has been delayed until spring 2019 to allow it to coincide with the launch by CBP of the Snow Roads website and App. It is pleasing to report that this work won the 2018 Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Award for innovation in tourism and goes forward to the [Scottish Tourism Thistle Awards](#) on 14 March 2019.

Facing a challenging winter with a closed funicular railway this year's budget has been used to promote the visitor experience on the western side of the National Park with CBP leading this work. The BBC Winter Watch, Spring Watch and Autumn Watch programmes will also raise the profile of the Cairngorms National Park across the UK.

STEAM Data

We have signed a three year STEAM contract for 2017, 2018 and 2019. The 2017 data is now available and show that visitor numbers have increased by 6.4% from 2016 to 1.84M. This is the largest annual increase in total visitor numbers seen since the start of our data in 2009 (visitor numbers have increased by 17.9% since 2009). A summary of the data will shortly be available to download from [our website](#).

Visitor Survey

Following competitive tender we have appointed Progressive Partners to undertake the 5 yearly all park visitor survey starting in May this year. This involves face to face question interviews with 2,500 visitors across the National Park and builds on the previous surveys completed in 2004, 2010 and 2015. This data is extremely useful in understanding visitor motivation and expectation and focuses our work in delivering the National Park Partnership Plan. The first six month data is likely to be available late 2019. A [summary of the 2015 data](#) is available on the Cairngorms National Park website.

Branded Merchandise Trial

Branded merchandise has been sold at the Grantown Museum and the VisitScotland VICs at Aviemore and Ballater during 2018 with all products making a modest contribution towards the Cairngorms Trust. To date 9 branded products have been developed which have raised around £200 for the Cairngorms Trust. Information on the availability of these products for retail will be promoted through the *Make It Yours* Campaign.

Partner Visitor Information Centres

Work is ongoing to build stronger relationships with and between local visitor information centres to support them in providing the best possible visitor information about the National Park. To date ten partnership agreements have been signed at:

- Blair Atholl
- Crathie/Balmoral
- Dulnain Bridge (Heather centre)
- Glenshee
- Grantown on Spey (museum)
- Kingussie caberfeidh shop

- Laggan wolftrax
- Laggan shop
- Nethy Bridge
- Tomintoul

Discussions in Braemar, Newtonmore, Bridge of Caley, Belabeg and Tarfside are being explored. Early discussions in Blairgowrie and Glen Esk have not progressed.

Visitor Giving Scheme

Nancy Chambers has been appointed as The Cairngorms Trust manager on a two year contract and as part of her remit she will explore how we can introduce a visitor giving scheme to help raise funds for The Cairngorms Trust. Plans are underway to launch the Visitor Giving Scheme at the Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend opening event on Friday 10th May in Boat of Garten. Funding has previously been raised for the Cairngorms Trust via the Cairngorm Brewery, CNBW ticket sales, one off donations from individuals, a bequest and more recently via our Branded Merchandise sales resulting in £23,000 being available for distribution towards landscapes, wildlife and local culture projects. Infrastructure and Nature based projects are currently being looked at for funding. Further options for raising voluntary donations are being explored. The Cairngorms Trust is currently looking to invite local nature based projects to apply for support funding which will be announced at the Big Nature Weekend with a small grants scheme opening later in the year.

Cairngorms Nature Campaign

Outcome - more visitors & residents engage with Cairngorms Nature

Agreed targets 2018/19:

- *Increase CN Festival attendees by 10% Year on Year (Target 2200 & 3000 by 2022)*
- *Increase social media followers by 20% year on year (Target 14,400 & 30,000 by 2022)*
- *30 Volunteer Rangers recruited by 2022*

Cairngorms Nature Profile – Following the consultation on the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2019-2024 which received 132 responses the final plan was launched alongside the Forest Strategy with delivery partners and interested parties on **1 March at the Boat of Garten Community Hall**. To raise the profile with MSPs and other key stakeholders an exhibition and lunchtime event sponsored by Graeme Dey MSP took place at Holyrood **19-21 February** to showcase the Cairngorms Nature Partnership and discuss the ambitions, opportunities and challenges over the next five years. In addition, Cairngorms Nature is promoted via the Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend, Volunteering Cairngorms and the Capercaillie Framework project. To date Cairngorms Nature has over 19.9K social media followers.

Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend – The LEADER funded Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend Development Officer role aims to make a step change in the event's long term profile, attendance, connection with business and community and its sustainability. The role of the development officer is to create and oversee the delivery of a business plan for the CN Big Weekend 2018, trialling a new approach to strengthen ties with communities and businesses and develop a sustainable future for the event. This post ended in February 2019 and the CNBW work is now embedded into the CNPA's Conservation Engagement officer post. Plans for CNBW 2019 are well underway with a final programme of over 60 events

finalised ready to be launched by April 2019. The Cairngorms Trust Visitor Giving scheme will be launched at the CNBW 2019 opening event on **10 May at the Boat of Garten Community Hall.**

Cairngorms Nature Volunteering – [Volunteer Cairngorms](#), launched in 2017, is a pilot programme funded by LEADER and CNPA encouraging, supporting and providing opportunities for people to benefit from looking after nature and the environment across the National Park through volunteering. Originally funded for 3 years, funding for the pilot phase for the programme has now been extended to September 2020.

There are three main areas of activity:

- (1) The Cairngorms National Park Volunteer Ranger scheme recruits, trains and manages a team of Volunteer Rangers who support a range of Ranger Service partners across the National Park in their work. To date the 14 Volunteer Rangers have given over 2000 hours to the programme, with two of the team being nominated for – and winning – the UK-wide 2018 National Parks UK Volunteer Awards in the individual category. In 2019 we will be recruiting a further 12 Volunteer Rangers.
- (2) We raise awareness of existing opportunities to volunteer across the Cairngorms: to date almost 100 opportunities have been advertised on our webpages, through [social media](#) and through our newsletters with partners across the area.
- (3) We are working with communities to help establish new groups focused on nature and the environment, supported with training, tools and equipment.

We are working closely with the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project and the newly appointed Conservation Engagement Officer, and held an event open to all on the 23 February in Carr-Bridge where anyone interested in volunteering for nature or the environment met representatives of over 20 organisations, Volunteer Rangers, and could give volunteering a go. Over 60 members of the public attended the event and a further 12 volunteer rangers are being recruited.

To better promote the collective partnership work of Volunteer Cairngorms a brand has been developed following guidelines previously used for similar brands promoting nature and outdoor access:

- CNPA are a lead partner
- Work is either Park Wide or of National importance
- Is supporting a 'long life project' and is not branding an area
- Is supporting a key project that has multiple partners public, private, third sector
- Clearly uses the word 'Cairngorms' as part of the identity
- Should have no subtext as the identity is clear

CAIRNGORMS NATURE

Active Cairngorms



This identity 'headlines' the collaborative volunteering work in the National Park of RSPB, NTS, Highlife Highland, Forest Enterprise Scotland etc. and ourselves.

Active Cairngorms Campaign

Outcome - Visitors/residents are more active in the Park

Agreed targets:

- *Increase WWW attendees by 10% Year on Year (Target 440 & 600 by 2022)*
- *Increase social media followers by 20% year on year (Target 2880 & 6000 by 2022)*
- *Maintain delivery of 16 (revised from 25) Walking to Health groups*

Active Cairngorms Both CNPA Board and Highland Council Area Committee agreed the first stage of the **Active Aviemore Project** confirming that a functional multiuse path can be constructed through the village linking to the existing village path network and the wider network of Speyside Way, Old Logging Way and National Cycle Network 7. The next stage is the development of a first stage Design Plan for the area around the proposed new hospital. This detailed design work is scheduled to be completed by autumn 2019.

Active Glenmore Scottish Government Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) managed by Visit Scotland was launched at the end of March 2018 to sustainably enhance visitor experiences while demonstrating both effective partnership and community capacity building. Our application supported by Forest Enterprise Scotland and Sustrans to create a 1.1 km tarmac multiuse path in Glenmore linking the Beach car park to Hayfield and all the visitor attractions has secure £324,000 subject to planning consent. We have contracted Aecom to make this application in February with construction scheduled for autumn 2019.

Wee Walks Week – now set for 9-15 September 2019. In 2018 we maintained the week but did not improve or expand it because of the work involved with the EUROPARC conference. Again our focus will be on encouraging less active residents and visitors to 'get out' for a short walk for both function and enjoyment, and encouraging school involvement. We will also use it as an opportunity to celebrate and promote the 16 health walks groups in the Park. In order to encourage greater path use we are also creating a mobile phone app to allow the 17 community path leaflets to be accessed this way. Active Cairngorms is promoted via the Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend, Volunteer Cairngorms and our social media activity. To date Active Cairngorms has 3,759 social media followers.

Health Walks & 'Getting Started' Pathway – There are now 16 [Active Cairngorms Health Walks](#) taking place across the Cairngorms National Park area. This is a reduction from the previous total of 25, as CNPA inherited the support of 9 groups that walked outwith the CNP boundaries. These have been realigned with the Aberdeenshire Health Walk coordinator and 2019 will see a year of building the awareness and identity of the 16 remaining groups. In 2018, 51 new walkers joined the programme, nine training and support sessions took place with 91 attendances and we piloted 'Next Step' walks which would be delivered by partners and provide a progression route for walkers. In addition to building awareness of the newly realigned Health Walk group structure, key activity will also include piloting Dementia Friendly and Macmillan Friendly accreditation with the groups, and re-engaging with medical practitioners.

Corporate Communications:

Outcome - Communications & Engagement Strategy is co-ordinated across the organisation and our corporate plan communication priorities are delivered

Agreed targets:

- Website sessions (Target 228K & 400K by 2022),
- Total Social Media followers (Target 28.8K & 50K by 2022),
- MSP survey results (maintain 2014 MSP survey results – next survey to take place 2020)

Digital Communications – a digital strategy, prepared by Sian Jamieson, has increased our Social Media reach and engagement figures significantly. Statistics over the last few years show steady progress towards increased reach and engagement through our digital communications activities. Our website statistics show 240,268 sessions during 2018 and our social media accounts (4 twitter: C-News, C-Nature, Active-C, Volunteering-C and 3 Facebook: C-National Park, C-Nature, Active-C) are performing well with 33,072 followers and reach of 3.9 million. A review of our digital performance in 2018 is attached Annex 1.

Corporate Publications & Consultations – The [Cairngorms Forest Strategy](#) and [Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2018-2024](#), following public consultation, have been published on the CNPA Website. Both were launched on **Friday 1 March** and the work of the Cairngorms Nature Partnership was promoted with MSPs and partner organisations at Holyrood **19-21 February**. The [proposed Local Development Plan](#), following consultation on the Main Issues Report, has been prepared and is out for consultation. [CNPA's Annual Report 2017/18](#) was submitted to Ministers and published on our website in autumn 2018 and Bòrd na Gàidhlig approved the second iteration of the [CNPA's Gaelic Language Plan](#) which has been published on our website in both Gaelic and English.

Stakeholder Engagement – A Communications Grid has been prepared to help coordinate our communication activities across the organisation to deliver stronger and more consistent messages about the work of the Park and role of the Park Authority. The Communications Grid identifies a core theme and key messages for each month of the year alongside the communication activities: digital communications, traditional media, stakeholder communications & events. This new approach will be managed by the Management Team and Organisational Management Group and will be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

EUROPARC 2018 - As part of the Year of Young People 2018 the CNPA hosted the EUROPARC Conference *Inspired by the Next Generation* on 18-21 September. Over 600 European delegates, many under the age of 30, attended and the conference was formally opened by Mairi Gougeon, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment and closed by John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. The conference was the biggest gathering of National Parks and protected areas ever held in Europe with world class speakers presenting their views on how to get young people more involved in nature. Delegates also enjoyed a wide selection of workshops and field trips across the Cairngorms National Park as well as social evenings which celebrated Scottish Highland food, drink and music. The [EUROPARC conference](#) report has been prepared and will be published on the EUROPARC Federation website. A [Youth Manifesto](#), launched at the conference, has led to the Cairngorms National Park Authority developing a Youth project to take forward the recommendations presented in the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto.