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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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## MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at the Lonach Hall, Strathdon on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at 11.30 am

### PRESENT:

Peter Argyle  
Duncan Bryden  
Angela Douglas  
Jaci Douglas  
David Green(Convener)  
Kate Howie  
Marcus Humphrey  
Gregor Hutcheon

Bob Kinnaird  
Mary McCafferty  
Eleanor Mackintosh  
Willie McKenna  
Ian MacKintosh  
David Paterson  
Gregor Rimell  
Brian Wood

### In Attendance:

Will Boyd-Wallis  
Stephanie Bungay  
David Cameron  
Pete Crane  
Murray Ferguson  
Matthew Hawkins

Jane Hope  
Alison Lax  
Karen Major  
Hamish Trench  
Francoise van Buuren

### Apologies:

Geva Blackett  
Andrew Rafferty  
Allan Wright

### Welcome and Introduction

1. David Green started by paying tribute Mandy Mathieson, a young member of staff who had died suddenly on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October. As a member of the Finance team she had always been helpful, courteous, and always had a twinkle in her eye. She had been proud to be part of the community in Tomintoul, and she would be greatly missed by everyone. The thoughts of the Park Authority were with Mandy's partner and her family.

### Minutes of Last Meeting – approval

2. The minutes of the meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010 were approved subject to two minor amendments: including a comment at Paragraph 9 to the effect that acronyms should be spelt out in full in Board Papers; at Paragraph 34 (a) it was noted David Green had attended the launch of the Grantown Learning Centre.

3. The minutes of the meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> October were approved with no changes.

### **Matters Arising**

4. In respect of the minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> October, Paragraph 12, David Green explained he had followed up the discussion about business rates with a letter to the Minister Jim Mather.
5. David Green reported that as of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November there would be a further change in Board Membership. David Paterson had been made an offer of work on biodiversity in China which he had, with some reluctance, decided to take up as it represented a lifetime opportunity. As of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November, Gordon Riddler, currently Chair of the Ballater Royal Deeside, would be a Member of the CNPA Board.

### **Declarations of Interest**

6. Willie McKenna declared a direct interest in Paper 6 on Rangers, given that he was employed as a ranger by one of the services which received CNPA funding. He therefore concluded he should leave the discussion. Marcus Humphrey noted an indirect interest in Paper 4 as a Director of COAT.

### **Briefing on National Park Plan Priorities for Action: 1, 2 and 3 (Biodiversity, Land and Deer Management) (Paper 1)**

7. Hamish Trench introduced the paper which set the context for the next three papers by providing the Board with an overview of the CNPA's contribution to delivery of the three National Park Plan Priorities for Action. The paper set out the importance of the three priorities for action in the Park. Three quarters of the National Park was in private ownership, with the rest in the ownership of the public sector and NGOs (Non Government Organisations). The wide range of interests and objectives, and hence of motivations, was therefore relevant in the use and management of the land in the National Park. 70% of the National Park was registered agricultural land and therefore was influenced heavily by agricultural support systems. Against this background, it was "a crowded field" of partners and groupings all with an interest in the management of land. The challenge was to bring together the public sector partners to innovate and do things differently in a climate of change. The private sector, notably the SRPBA as an example, were seeing the merits of using the National Park to trial innovative ideas; the voluntary sector (essentially the NGOs) had significant land holdings and also significant influence within Scotland as a whole and the challenge for the CNPA was to engage better and more consistently with this group.
8. The role of the CNPA was essentially therefore one of coordination; not duplicating what others do, but more importantly making sure that the CNPA did not substitute for others. This was becoming a bigger and bigger challenge as budgets were cut and other public sector partners withdrew funding from projects. The challenge remained to consider to what extent should the CNPA step in and take over in these situations. These issues were relevant in all of the three following papers. (2, 3, and 4)
9. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) Paragraph 18 listed the number of significant projects currently under way. It was important to emphasise that these were all partnership projects in which the CNPA had an important role, but was not the only delivery agent. The Wildcat Project in particular was noted as very successful with considerable public interest. It was good profile for the Cairngorms National Park and good profile for wildcats. The project involved the CNPA, Forestry Commission Scotland, Game Keepers Association, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, and SNH – a good example of partnership.
- b) It was noted that it was difficult to engage with the NGO/voluntary sector, as there was not an overarching body other than Scottish Environment Link which was an association of individual organisations. Environment Link had been very focused on the campaigning, and National Parks were not particularly high on the agenda. Board Members indicated their willingness to help out with making those connections more effective.
- c) Cairngorm Mountain was now part of the HIE (Highlands and Islands Enterprise) estate and was totally in public sector ownership, and while that could change in the future, there was now an opportunity to ensure that National Park interests were reflected in the Management Plan of the Estate.
- d) The wide scope of the CNPA's activity was noted in this area, but further analysis was needed on the pressures and hence the drivers for activity, the most important of these being financial. This would affect all public sector partners and was likely to lead to cut backs in funding on projects. Therefore against this background, an important role of the CNPA was to get collective agreement on the priorities and ensure everyone was focused on these.
- e) The biggest challenge was engaging people. The LBAP Project (Local Biodiversity Action Plan) was a good example of this where there was a risk of a spiral of decline as local authorities pulled out their funding, with the risk that the NPA would be left by default as the sole funder. It was important to look for solutions that would enable communities in the Park with a genuine interest to be able to deliver on biodiversity projects.
- f) The pragmatism shown in getting on with delivering projects was commendable. At the other end of the spectrum it was dangerous to simply articulate high and lofty ambitions. Somewhere between these two extremes the CNPA needed to focus on outcomes with a clear sense of purpose rather than get spread too thin across too many projects without a clear sense of why these were important.
- g) There was some brief discussion about influencing the SRDP (Scottish Rural Development Programme) in the future. Ideally, the CNPA would like to be able to better match the SRDP spend to priorities set out in the National Park Plan, and also be able to be more proactive in getting land managers to collaborate in order to do this. This had been difficult with the SRDP as currently formulated and implemented. Nevertheless, the best way of influencing land management in the National Park remained with influencing the SRDP rather than seeking a separate scheme. The CNPA was working with SNH in analysing how the current SRDP schemes have operated in both Scottish National Parks, and the intention was to put forward practical ideas to the Scottish Government on how things could work better in National Parks in the future through the new SRDP, noting that this would change with the review of the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) after 2013. It was noted in passing that in previous years the CNPA had put in a huge amount of time with the Scottish Government on the first round of RPACs (Rural Priorities Advisory Committees) and ultimately not been able to influence the RPAC boundaries.

- h) The current consultation by the Scottish Government on the Sustainable Land Use Strategy was noted; this helpfully mentioned Scotland's National Parks. It was noted that the Board would be having an informal discussion on the 26<sup>th</sup> November on the National Park Plan and this would include consideration of the Sustainable Land Use Strategy and opportunities to discuss how this could apply to the Cairngorms National Park. It was also noted at the Land Managers Forum on the 25<sup>th</sup> November, that the Sustainable Land Use Strategy would be discussed and there would be a spokesperson at the meeting from the Scottish Government.

## **10. The paper was noted with approval.**

### **Deer Framework for the National Park (Paper 2)**

- 11. Will Boyd-Wallis introduced the paper which updated the Board on progress made in "supporting sustainable deer management" in the National Park and recommended endorsement of the Deer Framework prepared by the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group. The framework was not just about deer, but about people, landscapes and the economy. Work on this priority for action had brought people together to deal with difficult issues collectively. A meeting of CDAG (Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group) on the 11<sup>th</sup> November would be looking to finalise the Deer Framework. It was noted that the Framework was not an end in itself but was the start of further and coordinated action; hence the delivery section at the end of the Framework was particularly important.
- 12. In discussion the following points were made:
  - a) There was some discussion about the roles indicated for each of the four groups under Section 10 (delivery). A number of roles had been allocated to the CNPA and while there was no dissent from the idea that the CNPA had a role in each of these, the question was the extent to which these roles were just for the CNPA. For example, conducting research into the value of deer and associated economic importance in the National Park was not principally or solely for the CNPA. Similarly promoting venison and other deer related products was a role shared by a wide number of people and groupings and the challenge was to take opportunities that arose for promoting venison. For example, for the CNPA in particular it would be through the vehicle of the Food for Life Strategy and Action Plan approved at the last Board meeting. But this should not be taken to mean that this was solely the CNPA's responsibility. All the roles depended to a large degree on partnerships.
  - b) Outcome 3 for this priority action in the National Park Plan was for good communication and understanding. There was a real challenge to get across positive messages to the general public about the importance of deer.
  - c) Promoting new opportunities for more people to understand and experience deer management and stalking was laudable, but no one should lose sight of the fact that this was a difficult operation and required people to be trained in the use of a gun; it should not be treated casually.
  - d) Page 4 of the Deer Framework set out the membership of CDAG. While this was quite wide, it was nevertheless a list of predominantly deer focused organisations. There was no listing from the business sector or from tourism interests. There was a dilemma for deer groupings in that they saw themselves

as an economically important activity but did not participate in other economic forums. It was agreed to make this point to CDAG.

- e) Section 5 of the Deer Framework addressed the economic value of deer. There was a high cost to the public purse on some aspects of deer management such as the high cost of fencing, and the cost of road accidents. For a balanced picture these costs needed to be included in any assessment of the economic value of deer.
- f) The issue of deer management was complex not least because decisions needed to be made on a broad front about the interaction of species, including rare plants, deer, capercaillie etc. Legislation helped to some extent through Section 7 agreements (focused on achieving favourable condition of designated sites). There were plans for mapping aspirations for deer density, and this provided a good way of flagging up where issues might occur, and identifying biodiversity hot spots for example. In practice, CNPA had very little control over day to day management decisions. National land management subsidy systems did not help us in that respect. It was therefore essential to build good working relationships with all of those involved. This was the only long-term and sustainable approach.
- g) It was noted that it was notoriously difficult to predict deer movements.
- h) Will Boyd-Wallis was congratulated on his work with deer, as was his predecessor Colin McClean.
- i) It was noted that the aspirations of the Deer Framework (Paragraph 20 of the covering paper) were wide and commendably ambitious, but there was some caution over the realism.

**13. The recommendations of the paper were approved as follows:**

- a) Noted with approval the progress made on the National Park Plan priority for Action, supporting sustainable deer management;**
- b) Congratulated the CDAG on the preparation of Deer Framework;**
- c) Endorsed the content of the Deer Framework (in particular Sections 9 and 10);**
- d) Commended the work of Will Boyd-Wallis and Colin McClean in progressing this work.**

**Wildlife Estates Scotland Initiative (Paper 3)**

14. Hamish Trench introduced the paper which updated the Board on the development of “Wildlife Estates Scotland” and sought endorsement of a pilot scheme in the Cairngorms National Park to trial this initiative further. The private land management sector, led by the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA) and Scottish Estates Business Group (SEBG) was developing an accreditation scheme for sporting estates know as “Wildlife Estates Scotland”. This was based on an existing scheme endorsed by the European Commission and sought to ensure best practice in game and wildlife management and to demonstrate the economic, social and environmental outcomes delivered by sporting estates. Although being developed as a national initiative, it was proposed to use a pilot focused on the Cairngorms National Park to help develop the scheme and test its implementation. This was a significant step led by the private sector across Scotland. The intention was to make the scheme robust, and it was significant that the SRPBA wished to do a pilot in the Cairngorms to help develop the detail of how such a robust scheme would operate. It was a good opportunity to engage with estates; it provided an opportunity to improve monitoring; and it provided a potential to make other connections, for example with the use of the Cairngorms Brand. The initiative

had strong Ministerial support and there was an opportunity for the launch of the pilot in the Cairngorms National Park in February/March. It was emphasised this was not the CNPA's project and credit was due to SRPBA and SEBG, but the initiative offered benefits for the National Park and an excellent opportunity to work with and through others, very much in line with the CNPA's ethos.

15. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) This was an excellent example of leadership by the private sector, and using the Cairngorms National Park as an exemplar. The initiative should be supported, and wished every success.
- b) It was important that the scheme was robust and had credibility for the CNPA to be associated with it. The second level of accreditation appeared to be an opportunity to mention landscapes and possible socio-economic interests. However, it was recognised that while there was an opportunity to broaden the initiative in due course, it was important to get the scheme off the ground in the first instance with a clear focus.
- c) It was suggested that the pilot should be on the basis of a National Park with a "fuzzy boundary" in order to encourage working across boundaries.
- d) There was some discussion about the incentives for estate owners to take part, particularly if they were not in receipt of public funding. The incentive was essentially peer pressure and political pressure. If private estates were not seen to be taking voluntary action to demonstrate their contribution to economic, social and environmental outcomes for Scotland as a whole, then legislative constraints would inevitably follow. It was noted that Ben Alder and Glen Feshie were good demonstrators of what this initiative was about.
- e) It was reassuring to see these wider opportunities being recognised for use of the Cairngorms Brand, going beyond tourism.

16. **The Recommendations of the paper were approved as follows:**

- a) **The Board welcomed the proposed pilot for "Wildlife Estates Scotland" in the Cairngorms National Park.**

#### **Enhancing Delivery of Natural and Cultural Heritage Projects (Paper 4)**

17. Matthew Hawkins introduced the paper which considered the options for continuing delivery of natural and cultural heritage priorities in the Cairngorms National Park, including a review of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and the potential for a trust model for delivery. The driver for the paper was the need to find a vehicle for continuing to deliver on the LBAP project against a background of reducing financial contributions from the public sector. The added driver was the need to find a sustainable vehicle for future delivery of community heritage projects, given that the current project was only for two years and had one more year to run. In both cases the aspiration was to build capacity within communities to deliver projects with a degree of independence from the public sector. The LBAP Management Group had identified revisions needed to the LBAP Plan itself, the composition of the partnership, and the way in which projects were structured and funded. The community heritage project was due to end in 2011 and follow-on arrangements needed to be considered now. Experience to date suggested that in the future the nature of projects would need to change, by bundling small and individual initiatives together to create fewer but larger applications fitting within an agreed strategy for the Park as a whole.

18. A trust was proposed as a key delivery mechanism for both natural and cultural heritage projects – to increase capacity, raise and use funds more effectively, and to engage a wider range of partners than current arrangements. An initial steer on the principle and options was sought from the Board.

19. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) Further clarification was sought on Paragraph 21 and the proposition that the formation of a heritage trust would not replace the need for the LBAP Partnership or equivalent. The point was made that a trust was essentially about delivery, but there remained a need to bring partners together around priorities for the National Park. Staff would still be needed to deliver and there would not be a need for staff and organisational infrastructure for both LBAP and the trust (if a trust was formed, the assumption was that LBAP staff would become trust staff).
- b) The COAT (Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust) model had been very successful. If an additional trust was set up to deal with heritage projects there would still be a requirement for funding – if funding was not there for the LBAP project would it be there for the heritage trust?
- c) Reference had been made to bundling cultural heritage projects together. Caution was needed in doing this as such an exercise could lead to the resulting project being too large for communities to handle. On the other hand bundling small projects together had the advantage that it created an initiative with enough critical mass to enable the funding of an individual for the very purpose of supporting the application.
- d) The view was expressed that labels such as “biodiversity” were not particularly helpful in that they were not well understood by the public. Interestingly, local people seemed to be more interested in cultural heritage than natural heritage projects and this may affect badging of a joint trust. “Wildlife” seemed to be a label that resonated with the public.
- e) As part of considering the future vehicles for natural and cultural heritage projects, the possibility of existing vehicles/trusts within the Cairngorms should be investigated.
- f) The possibility of COAT expanding its remit to take on natural and cultural heritage projects had received some exploratory discussion as set out at Paragraph 28 and 29. There was still further discussion to be had but it was noted that once COAT had dealt with the immediate challenge of core paths and the upland paths project they may have capacity to develop. The counter view was that path work would never dry up as there would be ongoing maintenance require in perpetuity.
- g) The Lake District Tourism and Environment Partnership had developed a project “Nurture Lakelands” which engaged people in a more active way, and importantly engaged businesses as well which was vital.
- h) Paragraph 24 highlighted the option of working with other trusts, or possibly a combination of trusts of which there were a plethora across Scotland. It might be worth looking at how skills could be shared, and how NGOs could be involved in this joint venture; so perhaps a fourth option could be an informal alliance. It was noted that this myriad of groupings across Scotland would all be looking for opportunities as funding dried up.
- i) There was the advantage of a bespoke trust that it could be very clearly labelled as related to the Cairngorms National Park – it was important not to lose that connection.

- j) The composition of any trust must incorporate a serious and credible scientific understanding.
  - k) The landscape for funding applications was extremely complex and in practice far too complex for many communities. Ideally we should be looking to make sense of that complexity with the formation of a single trusted organisation that everyone could gravitate towards. Whilst this was a laudable and sensible aspiration, it nevertheless had to be recognised that the CNPA had and could have no control over the voluntary and private sector groupings forming around a particular set of interests.
  - l) The idea of a trust had considerable support around the table. However the hope was expressed that cultural heritage was not swamped by biodiversity and natural heritage interests.
  - m) It was crucial to try and engage businesses. If good science could be developed and implemented, and this communicated to businesses, they in turn would use this and communicate it to visitors. There was currently a knowledge transfer project underway which offered opportunities to make more commercial use of information about the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park.
20. The Convener summed up by acknowledging there was clearly need for help at local level with local initiatives and projects, but at the same time a need for a strategic framework was needed to ensure ideas could be implemented effectively and efficiently. Summarising, he suggested that there was general support for a trust but at this stage; nothing should be ruled out and further consideration should be given not only to a separate trust, and the development of the COAT, but also some of the ideas suggested for an alliance. Overall, any solution must not lose sight of the need to tap into the capacity of local communities.
21. **The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:**
- a) **Endorsed the direction of changes proposed by the LBAP Management Group;**
  - b) **Agreed that the principle of establishing a trust or similar mechanism to deliver natural and cultural heritage projects should be taken forward, taking account of comments made, and a further paper brought back to the Board for consideration in due course.**

### **Briefing on National Park Plan Priority for Action 7 (Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park) (Paper 5)**

22. Pete Crane introduced the paper which informed the Board on the CNPA's role in delivering the National Park Plan Priority for Action on "Raising Awareness and Understanding of the National Park". The paper was one of a series of background briefing papers to inform the Board of the work of the CNPA. This priority was fundamental to building support of the Cairngorms National Park which in 2003 was simply a line on the map as a result of secondary legislation; in the following seven years the job of the CNPA and partners had been to give this an identity, a sense of place, and to convey what was important about the Cairngorms National Park. In delivering on this enormous challenge, the CNPA with a small staff and a small budget had to develop a new way of working, which essentially was by working with and through other partners. These were set out in summary as follows:
- a) A brand had been established for the National Park – not for the National Park Authority. This was designed as a "flag" for the National Park, a quality brand,



and an icon to encourage responsible behaviour. A lot was therefore expected of it.

- b) Guidance in the form of “Telling the Stories of the Cairngorms National Park” had been developed to enable others (businesses, communities, individuals) to act as ambassadors for the National Park.
- c) Five panoramas had been developed depicting the Cairngorms National Park in three dimensions; there were five views so that there was no question of any one part of the Park always being at the back of the picture.
- d) Work done at Scotland level on “first impressions matter” had been taken forward and had driven the point of entry marker project, through which high quality granite markers had been put at all the entry points to the National Park. This large project had drawn down 30% of funding from partners.
- e) The CNPA did not own a visitor centre; it worked with Visitscotland and other partners to upgrade all the existing visitor information centres, to upgrade ranger bases and community information boards. The approach was to adapt to what everyone needed rather than have a one size fits all approach.
- f) The Park *Authority* did not have a ranger service – the Cairngorms National Park does have a ranger service, comprised of all the ranger services operating within the Park.
- g) The CNPA did not have an outdoor recreation centre. It used the John Muir Award which in the last seven years had connected 10,000 people to the outdoors. The Cairngorms National Park was also being incorporated to the Curriculum for Excellence.
- h) In the recent visitor survey 84% of visitors said that information about the National Park was easy to find (a significant increase from five years ago). The majority of leaflets about the National Park were produced by others, and not by the CNPA; the CNPA gave support to others. Guidelines had been produced on community path leaflets which were now badged in a uniform way as being within the National Park.
- i) Websites. This was complex and further work needed to be done but the opportunities were enormous.
- j) On marketing, businesses were taking the lead and currently concluding the development and implementation of a marketing strategy.
- k) There were seven outcomes in the National Park Plan under this priority for action. These were largely on track, although it was noted that volunteering was still an area in which significant progress had still to be made.

23. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) It was noted that Moray Council appeared to be withdrawing support from the visitor information centre in Tomintoul. The CNPA had earmarked money to upgrade this VIC and the feeling was that Tomintoul needed a VIC and the CNPA should encourage the Council to think hard before closing the VIC as a cost-saving measure. The Convener agreed to take this forward.
- b) The National Park offered opportunities to schools outside the boundary of the Cairngorms National Park. It was noted that the John Muir Award was actually run by the John Muir Trust across Scotland not by the CNPA who were in effect running a “franchise” within the Cairngorms National Park.
- c) Over 2,000 awards were presented annually in and around the National Park and the 10,000 award in the Cairngorms would be presented next month. The courses were delivered by a range of outdoor providers but all link participants

to the special qualities of the National Park through the need, discover, explore and conserve a wild place.

- d) There was some discussion about the fact that we were recording progress but this required us to know where we had started from. There was good baseline information about awareness of the National Park in the visitor survey conducted in 2004 and again in 2009. However there was lack of evidence at a deeper level about whether people really understood the special qualities of the National Parks and changed their behaviour. This was much more difficult to ascertain.
- e) There was some discussion about the Cairngorms Visitor Guide done in conjunction between the CNPA and VisitScotland and mentioned in the Action Plan at Annex I. The Cairngorms National Park fell into a number of different VisitScotland operational areas; it nevertheless made sense to have one guide for the Cairngorms National Park and the two organisations had liaised to achieve this over a number of years. Last year there had been some difficulties in bringing this collaboration into effect with the consequences that Grampian side of the Park was not well represented in the visitor guide. Both organisations acknowledged the difficulties and work was well in hand to correct this for next year. Nevertheless, the more general point was the lack of clarity within the public sector in respect of geography of the National Park not being reflected in operational areas of public bodies. This was seen in websites, guides etc. Considerable change in practice was still needed within the public sector to deal with this mismatch.
- f) The panoramas had a number of uses, and the intention was to make these available as posters for sale to the general public. The CNPA did not see its role as being in retail, and therefore was managing these sales through the private sector, and in particular through the Cairngorms Business Partnership.
- g) There was a huge challenge to communicate the value of the National Park through the public and politicians. Paragraph 4d) and 4e) of the paper set out the importance of this in respect of getting people practically involved in order to deepen their engagement with the National Park.
- h) Mick Pawley of Angus Council was present at the meeting and spoke briefly about the engagement of the Angus Rangers with the part of Angus that was in the National Park. The council was supportive of the benefits of the National Park and the Rangers and Ranger Base were badged accordingly.

**24. The Board noted the progress made in delivering the National Park Plan Priority for Action with approval.**

**Role of CNPA in Coordinating Ranger Services (Paper 6)**

*[Willie McKenna left the meeting for this item]*

25. Pete Crane introduced the paper which updated the Board on progress to date in coordinating ranger services and sought approval on the future funding support and development of a strategy across the National Park for rangers. Pete explained that rangers were a key tool for delivering the National Park Plan; Annex 2 listed the outputs that had been grant aided by the CNPA to this end. Annex 3 listed the impact of this work as demonstrated by the result of the recent visitor survey. Grant aid to the various ranger services operating in the Cairngorms National Park had until recently

been provided by Scottish Natural Heritage, after which this function had transferred (along with the funding) from SNH to the CNPA.

26. This unique approach to delivering a ranger service in a National Park in which the NPA did not manage and employ the ranger service, but funded existing services to deliver shared objectives, had a number of advantages. Park-wide coverage was achieved but managed at a local level; there was good partnership buy-in and the opportunity to work with a range of organisations in the interest of the National Park; the arrangement gave tremendous value for money (the grant aid would only employ three rangers on the more traditional NPA-run system). The disadvantages were that it had been slow to develop the identity of the Park and the ranger service; there was some lack of clarity on what the CNPA wanted for its grant (hence the agreed need for a strategy); and there was lack of direct control by the CNPA. This latter point was recognised as a theoretical disadvantage but in practice it was simply accepted as being part and parcel of working in partnership.
27. The recommendation was to continue funding ranger services for the next year, as in the previous year. A decision on funding of ranger services beyond that would be taken alongside all other decisions made as a new Corporate Plan was developed for 2012 onwards. This had been approved by the Finance Committee that morning as still being within the 30% forward commitment cap. (In other words, it could be accommodated within existing financial controls.) The logical extension was to apply the same rationale to the ranger service at Blair Atholl. It was noted as a technicality that in practice there would not be a “transfer” of £27,000 to the CNPA as a switch in funding would be effected by the Scottish Government as part of the spending review. The important principle was that the CNPA would take on the responsibility for funding.
28. It was proposed that a strategy would be developed over the next year to guide the work of all ranger services in the National Park. This would help to inform decisions on funding of ranger services beyond 2012 as the next Corporate Plan and National Park Plan was developed.
29. A Board paper in March 2010 had reviewed the issues surrounding informal camping in the National Park, and the particular problems identified with irresponsible behaviour at Clunie Flats on Invercauld Estate. The current ranger service arrangements had generally not been able to manage the issue satisfactorily for a variety of reasons. A greater presence was needed on the ground. Paragraph 31 of the paper indicated how discussions had developed to date. It was possible that a solution may require more funding whether this was for a hot spot officer or for a ranger.
30. In discussion the following points were made:
  - a) It was noted that at the recent ANPA (Association of National Park Authorities) meeting other NPAs had clearly been impressed by and envious of the approach to providing ranger services within the Cairngorms National Park, and the associated value for money.
  - b) Aberdeenshire Council were keen to engage with the CNPA in finding a solution to the Clunie Flats irresponsible camping behaviour challenge. It was noted that engaging with the police on this matter might work as it had done in other areas.
  - c) There was some discussion about how quality and consistency was delivered across such a large number of different ranger services. The CNPA held six-monthly meetings to monitor progress with delivery of an agreed work

programme. But the emphasis of the approach was that the CNPA were not the managers, and relied on the managers of the individual ranger services to deliver on quality. Mick Pawley of Angus Council noted that ranger services in Scotland were staffed by well trained professionals and there were rigorous agreements in place for monitoring work. He also pointed out that the CNPA did not just get rangers in return for grant aid but got all the associated training, admin support, HR support and other infrastructure which was provided by the employers, in this case the council.

**31. The Board agreed the recommendations of the paper as follows:**

- a) **Endorsed the effectiveness of the partnership approach adopted for managing ranger services in the National Park, and approved £148,600 of expenditure for ranger grant for 2011/12.**
- b) **Approved the development with partners of a focused strategy to guide the work of all ranger services in the National Park.**
- c) **Approved the transfer of responsibility for £27,000 for Atholl Estates Ranger Service from SNH to the CNPA for use as grant aid in 2011/12 (on the assumption that the transfer of associated funding would be made by the Scottish Government as part of the spending review).**
- d) **Noted the situation in Aberdeenshire and the attempts to develop, with partners, options to enhance the ranger presence to promote responsible behaviour. Any proposals that required additional funding would be approved by the Board.**

*[Willie McKenna returned to the meeting]*

**Cairngorms National Park Authority Draft Gaelic Language Plan (Paper 7)**

32. Stephanie Bungay introduced the paper which sought the Board's formal approval to consult on the draft Gaelic Language Plan. The CNPA had a statutory duty to prepare a Gaelic Language Plan setting out the measures to be taken in relation to the use of Gaelic in connection with the exercise of the organisation's functions. The Plan was based on the examples already produced by other public sector partners. The proposed consultation would run from the 8<sup>th</sup> December to 17<sup>th</sup> December 2010; the final Gaelic Language Plan would then be prepared for approval by the Board in January 2011. Funding had been secured for the publication, consultation and delivery of the Plan for the year 2010/11 through the CNPA's Operational Plan and funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig Language Act Implementation Fund. Resources for implementation beyond this date were uncertain and dependent upon the outcome of the Scottish Spending review.

**33. In discussion the following points were made:**

- a) It might be possible to make use of schools when dealing with translation;
- b) It was noted that the Gaelic Language Plan in question was a plan for the CNPA and not for the Park as a whole; this needed to be made clear in the consultation.

**34. The recommendations of the paper were approved as follows:**

- a) **The draft Gaelic Language Plan was approved for consultation from the 8<sup>th</sup> December to the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2010.**

## **Adoption of Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (Paper 8)**

35. Karen Major introduced the paper which sought the Board's formal resolution to adopt the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. The process of preparing and consulting on the Local Plan commenced in September 2004 with a Consultative Draft Plan. Following a series of public consultations the Plan had seen three sets of changes, all of which were subject to further consultation. The process culminated in all outstanding and unresolved objections to the Plan being considered by the Scottish Government Reporters at a Local Plan Inquiry in June 2009. Following receipt and consideration of the Reporters' Report a further set of post-inquiry modifications were published and consulted upon in May 2010. The CNPA Board agreed in September 2010 that no further changes should be made to the Plan following this period of consultation and the final stages to formally move towards adoption had then been undertaken. Formal notices had been published as required and Scottish Ministers informed. No further changes were proposed and Scottish Ministers confirmed that the CNPA could proceed to adopt the Local Plan without further amendment. The paper before the Board therefore sought formal adoption on the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan with immediate effect.
36. The next steps were set out in Paragraph 8, and the arrangements for monitoring set out in Paragraph 12.
37. In discussion the following points were made:
- a) Paragraph 11 noted that a programme of training events would commence to ensure that those who were implementing the Local Plan were clear on its key messages. Training would be for officials and applicants, and training for others such as community councils would also be provided; the service improvement plan for the CNPA's Planning service would be considered by the Board on the 12<sup>th</sup> November, and this would include a programme of training on planning for communities. In short, the CNPA was prepared to respond to any indication of a need for training and further information about the Local Plan.
  - b) This, the first Local Plan for a Scottish National Park, had been a long and exhaustive process. The officers concerned were to be warmly congratulated.
38. **The recommendations of the Paper were approved as follows:**
- a) **Noted that Scottish Ministers had given notification that the CNPA may proceed to adopt the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan as modified;**
  - b) **Agreed to adopt the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan as modified and agreed that the Plan should become operative on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2010;**
  - c) **Agreed to work proceeding on the necessary steps to advertise the adoption of the Local Plan as modified;**
  - d) **Noted that as part of the adoption procedures, under Section 238 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, a six week period was available for any person to make a legal challenge through the Court of Session.**
  - e) **The Board commended the work of all the staff involved in bringing the Local Plan to Completion.**

## **Adoption of Supplementary Planning Guidance (Paper 9)**

39. Alison Lax introduced the paper which sought the Board's agreement to adopt a number of pieces of Supplementary Planning Guidance to accompany the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. The Supplementary Planning Guidance provided further detail on a variety of topics to assist applicants in understanding requirements for their planning applications, adding a level of detail which would not be appropriate for the Local Plan itself. The Guidance supported the adopted Local Plan and formed a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and appeals. It was noted that a range of topics were covered by the Supplementary Planning Guidance and while the paper brought forward the first group for formal approval (following a period of public consultation), work was still continuing on additional pieces of Guidance which would be available for public consultation in the New Year.

40. **The Board approved the recommendations of the paper as follows:**

**a) Approved the adoption of the following pieces of Supplementary Planning Guidance to accompany the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan:**

- i. Sustainable Design Guide**
- ii. Natural Heritage**
- iii. Water Resources**
- iv. Open Space**
- v. Housing Development Rural Building Groups**
- vi. Conversion and reuse of existing traditional and vernacular buildings**
- vii. Development briefs for the following sites – Dulnain Bridge H1, Grantown-on-Spey H1, Kinraig H1, Newtonmore H1, Newtonmore H2**
- viii. Core Path Plan**

**b) The Board noted the update on progress with Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance**

## **AOCB**

41. A number of points of information were made as follows:

- a) David Green reported on the successful launch of the Food For Life Project by Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary. He had attended the CoHI (Convention of the Highlands and Islands) in Orkney where there had been considerable discussion on the use of renewables; and he had outlined the work being carried out in the Cairngorms National Park with woodfuel. He noted that the next meeting with CoHI in March 2011 would be held in Boat of Garten, date to be confirmed. He had chaired an event in the margins of the UHI Mountains Conference entitled "Whose Parks Are They Anyway". This had been attended by a number of Board Members and had attracted a significant audience in a lively debate. The reaction was generally favourable towards the extension of the National Park into Highland Perthshire. He had attended the official welcome event for Highland Perthshire's inclusion into the National Park on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, with John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary. He had attended the ATTWS (Adventure Trade Travel World Summit), a huge meeting promoting adventure travel to delegates worldwide. Follow-up meetings were being held to ensure a lasting legacy from this very successful event in Aviemore.

- b) Eleanor Mackintosh reported on her attendance at Edinville WRI where there was a large audience very interested in the presentation about the National Park. She had also attended the Farmers Forum at the Lecht where there had been a good turnout.
- c) Brian Wood had attended the Outdoor Learning Conference in Balloch. This was part of the Education Project run jointly by the two National Park Authorities, Learning and Teaching Scotland, and eight local authorities. It was about breaking down barriers, in particular the barrier of getting children outside into the environment to learn. In this respect the National Parks had a vital role to play. This was the interim conference halfway through a two year project; the final conference in a year's time would be at Glenmore Lodge.
- d) David Patterson reported on his attendance at the Boundary Extension Event on the 4<sup>th</sup> October and the ATTWS event. He noted his intention to continue to act as an ambassador for the Cairngorms National Park whilst in China.
- e) Gregor Rimell reported on his attendance at the Perth UHI event.
- f) Mary McCafferty reported on her attendance at the quarterly Badenoch and Strathspey Ward Forum, chaired by Jaci Douglas.
- g) Jaci Douglas noted the Sustainable Tourism Strategy Workshop being held on the 8<sup>th</sup> November at Boat of Garten Hall. The final version of the Strategy would be considered by the Board in January.
- h) Marcus Humphrey reported on his attendance at relevant community council meetings and meetings of the Probus Ladies Group.
- i) Duncan Bryden reported on his attendance at the ATTWS meeting; and his attendance at the Eurosite Conference on protected areas in Dunblane. The main thrust had been the effects of Climate Change on Biodiversity and the evidence that there were already significant effects observed.

42. The Convener noted that with the departure of David Paterson there would be a vacancy on the Audit Committee. He proposed, and the Board agreed, that Gordon Riddler should take up this vacancy. The Convener also noted that there was now a vacancy on COAT with the departure of David Paterson and asked Members if they would consider expressing an interest in sitting as a director on behalf of the CNPA on that Trust.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

43. Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2011, Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey (venue TBC).