

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**DRAFT Minutes of the Staff Consultative Forum**

**Held via Lifesize**

**11:00am, on Monday 27 September 2021**

**Present**

David Cameron (Chair)  
Kate Christie  
Richard Hardy (Prospect Rep)(arrived late)  
Pip Mackie  
Adam Streeter-Smith  
Ed Swales  
Heather Trench

**Apologies**

Carolyn Caddick  
Deirdre Falconer  
Matthew Hawkins

**Item 1:**

**Welcome and Apologies**

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from the above people.

**Items 2:**

**Minutes of Last Meeting & Action Points**

2. The minutes from the previous SCF were approved and the action points updated.
3. It was agreed that David Cameron, Kate Christie and Pip Mackie would go through the outstanding action points before the next meeting.

**Item 3:**

**Paper 1: Office Return Project Consultation**

4. Kate Christie (KC) introduced the item, she explained that there had been a subsequent option developed - Option 4 which was missing from the documents circulated to SCF as this had been circulated to staff later and invited feedback.
5. The following feedback was provided:

- a) Clarification to what extent the days in the office would be specified by the organisation or by personal choice. KC responded that these would be reached in agreement between the employee and line manager, but any pattern had to work for both the organisation and the individual. The CNPA were not going down a prescriptive route. HR would only be involved where an agreement could not be reached. A request that this be included in the paper.
  - b) The need to ensure that staff are aware that they may be required to attend the office on any of their working days for meetings etc. DC responded that staff would be expected to attend the office when management had a valid organisational/team reason for doing so, and that there would be no initial contractual changes, with the approach being reviewed after 6 months and a full review after a year. KC replied that the approach relied on staff being flexible and appreciating that there may be times when people have to work in the office on days they may typically have chosen to be working from home.
  - c) 'Banking' of home working days. DC advised that an element of flexibility was required, with the balance of office/home working being assessed throughout the overarching flexi period.
  - d) It was recognised that it was key that line managers approached the considerations of staff working preferences in a consistent manner, even if the outcome was that there were variations of staff deployment between remote and office locations for service and business reasons.
  - e) If staff and their line managers struggle to reach a mutually agreeable working preferences pattern and HR were involved to support the process, the involvement of HR to not be seen as a negative. KC agreed with this statement and advised that the HR team were happy to support staff with this.
  - f) Office based time not to be seen as assumed/easier for staff living in GoS (due to the distance to the office) and therefore more requirement for them attending the office. DC responded that there needed to be a rationale for staff being in the office wherever based, to get the most out of both team and the office space and this could vary on a weekly basis.
6. David Cameron (DC) thanked everyone for responding to the consultation and attending the drop in sessions. He also conveyed thanks to the project team for all the work done. Kate Christie thanked everyone for their feedback.

**Item 4:**

**Paper 2: Complaints Handling Policy**

7. Kate Christie introduced the papers and invited feedback.
8. The following feedback was provided:
- a) Where complaints are received regarding outdoor access issues, these would not be seen as a complaint against the CNPA. KC responded that the complaints procedure being discussed was separate to representations made for access or planning issues.
  - b) Clarification at what point would a representation to an access / planning issue become a complaint against the organisation. DC responded that this would be reliant on individual staff judgement, but it was recommended to be explicit in

correspondence with members of the public e.g. any further correspondence will be treated as a complaint rather than through the statutory process. DC also advised that complaints aren't to be seen negatively but highlighting areas that are causing dissatisfaction and spotlighting where improvements can be made in the CNPA's service provision.

9. Kate Christie thanked everyone for their feedback.

**Item 5:**  
**H&S Update**

10. KC advised staff that the H&S Committee continued to meet quarterly. The members are: Mark Pocock, Vicky Walker, Alan Smith, Pip Mackie and Kate Christie. KC advised that the Resources Committee had oversight of the minutes and are available for staff to access on the R drive.
11. A staff rep raised the recent Fire Marshall training course and felt that the training could have been delivered with more content and in a more time effective way. Pip Mackie responded that all feedback was welcome and that a training evaluation form would be sent to all participants for their input, as this helped to shape future events.
12. A staff rep raised the issue of Columbia uniform and PPE. They requested that as the Columbia sponsorship deal would end in due course, would it be possible to look at both uniform and PPE requirements and find a provider that could cover both these options. KC replied that PPE kit is currently available separately from the Columbia kit, should a higher spec of item be required. DC advised that the timeline for the Columbia sponsorship would need to be looked at and how to move forward would be picked up in due course.

**Item 6:**  
**Leadership**

13. DC advised that there had been a change to the Committee structure at Board level. Committees now covered Resources (finance, staff etc.), Performance (assurance role regarding the delivery of third party funded projects e.g. TGLP / CCP etc.); Governance and Audit & Risk
14. DC was currently working on a Governance Responsibility Framework, which looked at providing more clarity around strategic Board decisions and those taken at an operational level.
15. KC provided an update on staff turnover. Since Nov 20 to Sept 21, there had been 45 posts recruited, of which 14 went to internal appointments. This was a positive story as it showed that the organisation had created openings for career development, something which previously had been highlighted as having 'limited opportunities' in the Best Companies staff survey.
16. Richard Hardy joined the meeting.

**Item 7:**  
**Equalities**

17. KC advised that some of this work had been delayed due to Covid-19 but that it was now a priority. KC provided an update on the Equalities work which had either been started or was planned for implementation:

- a) The Mainstreaming Report was required to be published every 4 years and updated every 2 years. The most recent version had been published in April 2021. CNPA, together with a number of organisations had approached the Equality and Human Rights Commission for an extension to the April 21 deadline, due to Covid 19. This had not been granted, as the Commission felt that minority groups had been disadvantaged by the pandemic and therefore it was even more important for these documents to be published. It was recognised that although the report that was published covered what was required to ensure compliance with the PSED, it was not an engaging of document and was bare of images. Vanessa Altweck was currently working on improving the presentation/appearance of the report to include infograms, case studies, graphs etc. and make it more engaging. It would go to the Resources Committee in February and then be presented to the Board in March
- b) The Borad Resources Committee has oversight of the biennial reports, but it was agreed these reports would also be presented to full board. In addition, Resources Committee would get an annual update of the delivery of the Equality Outcomes..
- c) The Equalities Advisory Panel had now been in place for a year and met monthly. Members were a mix of experts and enthusiasts who advise on a range of equality issues. Currently looking to recruit more members and staff are welcome to attend meetings.
- d) In the process of developing an internal equalities advocacy group. There had been one previously but this had dropped off at the same time as Inclusive Cairngorms. Currently drafting the Terms of Reference, in terms of which the group would seek to have representatives from across the different teams, including Conservation, Land Management, Comms, Corporate Services, Visitor Services, Rangers, Planning. In addition it may include Staff who felt they represented a minority and the group would be a space to share views and inform the work of the organisation. KC advised that there would be some members of staff who, due to their roles or responsibilities, would be 'ex officio' or automatic members of the group. After discussion, it was agreed that it would be most appropriate for the members of the group to decide if a member from SMT would also sit on the group. KC advised that after the Terms of Reference had been completed, they would go to SMT for approval and a request for volunteers to join the group sent out.
- e) It was recognised that the last substantial equalities training had been carried out sometime ago, although ELMS online equality training was currently required to be carried out on joining the CNP and then refreshed every 2 years. Therefore, a training brief was currently being developed to procure a programme of equalities training, this would focus less of the legislative framework, and more on lived experiences of equality issues and all staff and Board Members would be required to attend. A commitment had been made to deliver this within the current financial year and the intention was still to meet this timescale. A

suggestion was made that the equalities advocacy group be formed before organising the training, so that members could be consulted and be involved in this work. Recognition from staff that it was more important to get the training right than deliver within this financial year.

- f) It was recognised that the CNPA was a small organisation and potentially had a small number of people representing different minority groups. Discussions were being held with NatureScot to explore if CNPA staff could join their staff support network groups. A suggestion was made that if no progress was made with NS to consider looking at other organisations who may be able to offer this opportunity.

- 18. A staff rep provided feedback on equalities that had been received from a small group of people. The delay on equalities work due to Covid being understood but disappointment expressed at the postponement, as minority groups had been disadvantaged due to the pandemic. DC replied that the disappointment was acknowledged, the delay was due to other organisational priorities and not an unwillingness to progress the work.

**Item 8:****AOB****35 Hour Week:**

- 19. DC advised that this was still on the radar as part of a future pay remit. Staff would be consulted on this issue. However, it was not felt to be appropriate to consult with staff at the same time as the return to the office project.

**Active Travel:**

- 20. The return to the office project being a good opportunity to embed active travel and support staff with providing lockers, drying areas, promoting cycle to work scheme etc.
- 21. KC replied that the bathroom in No 16 was to be converted into a drying room. However, due to builders being incredibly busy this hadn't yet taken place. It was proposed that the office next door to the bathroom (Will Boyd Wallis' old office) could be a temporary area for leaving kit.
- 22. KC advised that at the present time, due to the cleaning schedule and availability of the cleaning staff, it was not possible for showers to be used as this was considered to be too high a Covid risk. This could be looked at going forward as it was recognised that it was a barrier to active travel.
- 23. DC advised that staff were able to use the 'active' flexi credit and this could be used whilst home working, where staff would have showering facilities available to them.

**Propsect Update:**

- 24. Richard Hardy gave an update on Prospect. He advised that it was good to see the hybrid work plan progressing. Work is starting on next years public sector pay remit, with the budget due to be announced in December. Work is being done on the 'right to disconnect' campaign, which is exploring what good looks like when accessing work outwith normal work hours.

**Staff Reps:**

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**Paper 3 29/10/21**

25. Pip Mackie advised that the call for SCF staff reps had been delayed from March due to the pandemic. It was agreed that the call for staff reps would be circulated to staff.

26. The meeting concluded at 12:40.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<b>24.09.18 Para 9c</b>	Data Breach Policy: A toolbox talk to be arranged on the policy after a staff meeting. To be done after March Staff meeting. <b>05.10.20: Ongoing</b>	KC	Dec 18
<b>24.06.19 Para 7</b>	Mental Health First Aid Policy: Additions to policy: Review in one year's time Inclusion of flow diagram. 15.06.20: Ongoing <b>06.10.20: Ongoing</b>	KC	
<b>09.12.19 Para 4h</b>	Travel & Subsistence Policy: Include a worked example of an expenses claim. 15.06.20: Ongoing <b>05.10.20: Ongoing</b>	DC	Mar 20
<b>09.12.19 Para 6</b>	Amend Terms & Conditions: Any staff dealing with payroll to be consulted regarding having a specific confidentiality clause inserted into their contract. <b>05.10.20: Ongoing</b>	KC	June 20
<b>16.03.20 Item 4</b>	Volunteering Policy: Mike Woolvin to have a discussion with other partner organisations regarding signing up to CNPA's volunteering policy. <b>05.10.20: Ongoing</b>	KC/MW	Sept 20
<b>16.03.20 Item 5</b>	Best Companies Staff Survey: Consultation events to be facilitated for Bands A-C regarding engagement. <b>05.10.20: Ongoing</b>  Contact Best Companies for the definition of 'Giving Something Back' and advise staff of the	KC	Sept 20

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	definition prior to the next survey being undertaken. <b>05.10.20: Ongoing</b>	KC	Sept 20
<b>05.10.20 Item 3 Para 2b</b>	Covid 19: Organisational Working  Fit for purpose assessment to be undertaken of all software in use.	IT	Mar 21
<b>Para 2j</b>	Staff teams to be set up to discuss collaborative working solutions <b>07.06.21 Ongoing</b>	KC/DC	Mar 21
<b>27.09.21 Item 2 Para 3</b>	Action Points: To be gone through to check if still relevant	DC/KC/ PM	Nov 21
<b>27.09.21 Item 3 Para 5a</b>	Return to Office Project: Inclusion of guidance as to how office/home work agreement should be reached and clarification of HR involvement.	KC	Oct 21
<b>27.09.21 Item 5 Para 12</b>	Columbia Kit: End date for Columbia sponsorship deal to be investigated and future options for uniform/PPE to be investigated.	DC/KC	April 22