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**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**DRAFT Minutes of the Staff Consultative Forum**

**Held via Lifesize  
11:30am, on Monday 20 March 2023**

**Present**

Adam Streeter-Smith  
David Cameron  
Ed Swales  
Heather Trench  
Kate Christie  
Lucy Ford (arrived late)  
Mariaan Pita  
Pip Mackie  
Richard Hardy (Prospect)

**Apologies**

Deirdre Falconer (Board Member and chair of Resources Committee)

**Item 1:**

**Welcome and Apologies**

1. David Cameron (DC) welcomed the group.
2. Apologies were received from the above.

**Item 2:**

**Review of Minutes of 25 January 2023 Meeting and Matters Arising**

3. Minutes were agreed and action points were reviewed.

**Item 3:**

**Paper 1: Neurodiversity Policy**

4. Kate Christie (KC) introduced the policy and advised that it had been developed through the internal equality and diversity group, and had also been discussed by the external Equality Advice Panel. The following points were raised:
  - a. The policy being welcomed.
  - b. The policy reflecting the importance of the work planning process.

- c. It being incumbent on the organisation to get reasonable adjustments agreed and in place as soon as possible. KC responded that the forthcoming Reasonable Adjustment Passport would align to this policy which should reassure staff on this matter.

5. KC thanked everyone for the feedback.

Lucy Ford joined the meeting.

#### **Item 4:**

##### **Paper 2: Staff Consultation on Proposed Phased Move to 35hr Working Week**

6. DC and KC introduced the paper and explained the approach to the phased introduction of reduced hours, trial period and monitoring and evaluation process with a view to implement reduced hours from 1 April 2023.
7. KC highlighted that this was an opportunity for staff to see what their work pattern may look like. Pip Mackie (PM) would be contacting all staff to obtain their specific work pattern to set up in PeopleHR (as this would affect annual leave recording). It was also proposed that all annual leave would be recorded in hours (as is currently done for part time staff) for all employees, as this allows for variability of work patterns, but this was later discounted and it was agreed to continue to record leave in days for full time staff (see para 9).
  - a. Concern regarding the availability of people (particularly management) for meetings etc. with everyone working different work patterns. DC advised that this would be monitored and reviewed.
  - b. Clarification if any work patterns would be unacceptable e.g. someone doing majority evening working. DC advised that it was expected that staff would respond with work patterns broadly covering the standard working week (between 07:30 – 6:30pm), and broadly resembling their existing work patterns. Any request for a move to compressed hours would be requested through FWR.
  - c. Capacity for workload needing to be monitored.
  - d. Differing work patterns will require staff to keep calendars updated with days / hours of work.
  - e. Flexi sheets – the possibility of reverting to recording the total hours worked that day (as was done during Covid). PM responded that it was envisaged that a new flexi sheet would be started from 1 April reflecting the new hours of work and adjusted accordingly for individual staff work patterns.
  - f. Clarification was sought over staff ability to accrue and use flexi if continuing to work 9 – 5pm. DC advised flexi would accrue as currently and taking of flexi would be for discussion between staff and line manager.
  - g. Line managers to use flexi to monitor staff workload (e.g. if staff are accruing large amounts of flexi credit). KC advised that job plans and performance development conversations were important and to use as a check in for monitoring workload. Any issues should be flagged to HR.
8. DC thanked everyone for their input and feedback.
9. Note: A guidance update was subsequently circulated advising that, after discussion, full time staff would continue to have their annual leave calculated in days.

## **Item 5:**

### **Paper 4: New Normal Survey**

10. KC advised that the new normal way of working started in June 2022 and therefore it was still in the 1 year trial period with a review every 3 months. AV equipment to be installed in Board Room on 17 April. The following points were raised:
  - a. It being the responsibility of the meeting organiser to specify whether meeting is in person or online. Outlook can auto create a Teams invite leading to confusion if the meeting is to be held in person. It was confirmed that it was for the meeting attendee to request the possibility of attending in a different way e.g. online. Staff would be reminded of this in the next staff newsletter and also of how to switch off the Teams auto creation link.
  - b. It was highlighted that the keyboards at desks were clunky and noisy. Feedback will be provided to IT.
  - c. There currently being 2 desk booking systems and the possibility of this being streamlined. KC responded that it would. Resource Central had been purchased but would only work after the organisation had moved over to the Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN), this will be implemented once move taken place.
  
11. DC thanked everyone for their input and feedback.

## **Item 6:**

### **Discussion: Dogs in CNPA Vehicles**

12. KC advised that a member of staff had queried if it would be possible to take dogs to site visits in pool vehicles. KC had contacted EELG colleagues to find out their approach to this. Their general position was that they did not allow dogs at work under any circumstances other than “service” dogs. This was due to several reasons, not everyone has same relationship with dogs, cleaning implications/costs and the various regulations for dogs being secured in vehicles including ventilation, as well as a plethora of issues regarding dogs on sites. From an organisation perspective, we did not think we were likely to change our policy position but happy to hear thoughts. DC advised that this had been raised before and our policy position had been that this had not been allowed. Points discussed were:
  - a. It being a personal choice to take dog on site and the possibility of using your own vehicle.
  - b. If dogs were allowed in cars, it would have to be limited to one vehicle and highlighted as such, this would restrict the number of vehicles available to staff with allergies. DC responded that if the organisation endorsed staff taking a dog to work (even on site visits), the CNPA could be liable for any actions of that dog. Therefore we had always taken the view that there should be a blanket ban on having dogs (or other animals) at work. Richard Hardy was supportive of this approach, as the organisation would be responsible for the animal, Risk Assessments would have to be carried out and would this cover all animals? If CNPA were to support this, then there would have to be a dedicated vehicle for use, as well as robust risk assessments to support it.
  - c. The possibility of significant reputational risk to CNPA (if any incident were to occur).

- d. Highlighting that site visits take place on various landowners land (not CNPA owned land – this is a different position to other organisations eg. NTS), and therefore land owner permission would be required every time someone took a dog on site, and associated risk assessments completed.
- e. .

- 13. It was agreed that this would not be implemented and an update on this position to be included in the next staff newsletter. DC thanked everyone for their input and feedback.

#### **Item 4:**

##### **Discussion: Health and Safety Update**

- 14. There were no updates from employer.
- 15. The concrete floor in shed at the rear of building had not been sealed and was dusty. The Ranger team had been advised not to sweep it out due to fine nature of dust particles. KC to feedback to the Facilities team and raise with the builders.

#### **Item 5:**

##### **Discussion: Leadership**

- 16. DC advised that the CNPA were now in the round of Board Member direct elections. This process was being managed by the Highland Council, with the count due to take place on 23 March. Members would be announced following the closure of this vote. Current public appointments round was also underway, with 6 places in total. It was advised that these would bring significant changes at Board level and induction plan for new the new members was currently being finalised.

#### **Item 6:**

##### **Discussion: Equalities**

- 17. KC advised that ELMS (online learning portal) was currently being updated, with many more equality and diversity courses being added. There currently wasn't any timescale for these being launched but staff would be advised in due course. It was advised that due to these updates (to all courses) the ELMS platform was currently not to be used and staff would be updated of this in the forthcoming staff newsletter.
- 18. Clarification if the new courses were mandatory. KC advised that they weren't. However, where a course aligns to an organisational policy, then the course will be compulsory for staff.

#### **Item 7:**

##### **AOB**

##### **Pay Award**

- 19. DC advised that no information had yet been received from Scottish Government regarding the 23/24 pay award. The budget proposal was going before Board this week and some assumptions had to be made. However, the figures would be updated once pay award information had been received.

Richard Hardy advised that a meeting taken place and the union had been informed that the SG Pay Policy should be published before the end March (including metrics for pay awards). It had been indicated that, unlike previous years, Prospect were not to receive advance copy. It was expected that the Pay Policy was likely to include a 2 year figure for awards in the region of 12%, which was similar to that being discussed with the NHS and teachers. DC advised that any pay award would apply from 1 April, but there was a need to look at our budget and Pay Policy, and given the lateness of this being published it was likely that implementation would be several months down the line. Therefore, an update on the pay position would be brought to the next SCF meeting to be held in June.

### **Volunteering Days**

20. KC advised that a paper had been circulated to staff reps from Colin Simpson regarding volunteering opportunities. This was aligned to the King's Coronation in May and was seeking to encourage people to volunteer during the week of the Coronation (W/c Mon 8 May). It was proposed to have some organised staff volunteering events on 1 day that week and the Visitor Services team were looking at creating and organising opportunities for staff to engage. This would give a more structured approach for staff to be able to use volunteering (paid) time.
21. This was welcomed but it was highlighted that all staff may not be able to take part if the volunteering was for one day only due to differing work patterns. DC responded that it was always difficult getting the best fit for all staff. There was the possibility for staff (with notice) to change their working days that week to allow them to engage in the activities.
22. It was highlighted that not all staff live near the office or they may already volunteer and may wish to do something nearer to home or take part in something they are already involved in. KC responded that staff were able to volunteer at alternative events. The spirit of the volunteering days policy was to encourage people to volunteer in the Park. However, it didn't preclude staff from volunteering outwith the Park. This would also support the organisational approach to greening with staff not having to travel to a volunteer event at the office.
23. If anyone had suggestions or ideas for wider volunteer opportunities, these should be fed back to Colin Simpson's team.

### **Pigeonholes**

24. It was requested if the staff pigeonhole system could be looked at. There were now more staff than pigeonholes. The possibility for having team pigeonholes was suggested, especially given the reduction in post being received at the office. It was agreed that KC would pick this up with Mariaan Pita.

**The meeting concluded at 12:50pm.**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<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	KC	

	<p>06.10.20: Ongoing</p> <p>06.12.21: Ongoing – MHFA training last week, policy to be looked at with new MHFA and reviewed in New Year</p> <p>07.11.22: Ongoing</p> <p>25.01.23: Ongoing</p> <p><b>20.03.23 – to be included in scheduled policy review. Timetable of policy review schedule to be brought back to SCF. Action removed.</b></p>		
<b>09.12.19 Para 6</b>	<p>Amend Terms &amp; Conditions: Any staff dealing with payroll to be consulted regarding having a specific confidentiality clause inserted into their contract.</p> <p>05.10.20: Ongoing</p> <p>06.12.21: Ongoing</p> <p>27.06.22: Ongoing</p> <p>07.11.22: Ongoing</p> <p>25.01.23: Ongoing</p> <p><b>20.03.23: Update: Wording has now been provided by lawyers and discussions are ongoing.</b></p>	KC	June 20
<b>06.12.21 Para 19</b>	<p>Electric Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme Future updates to be brought back to SCF</p> <p>27.06.22: Finance team looking into and any proposal will be brought to MT</p> <p>07.11.22: Still progressing</p> <p>25.01.23: Ongoing</p> <p><b>20.03.23: Update: Support had been received from NatureScot who had recently launched a similar scheme. Any proposals would go to MT then be brought back to SCF</b></p>	KC	June 22
<b>27.06.22 Para 12a</b>	<p>Staff Induction Process Feedback from staff survey on induction process to be presented at SCF</p> <p>25.01.23: Ongoing</p> <p><b>20.03.23: Ongoing</b></p>	PM	Sep 22
<b>07.01.23 Para 4</b>	<p>ODS &amp; Best Companies Survey: Update to be provided on revised membership of programme boards, ODS and Best Companies survey</p> <p><b>20.03.23: Update: Revised terms of reference had been circulated to members</b></p>	KC	June 23

	of the OD programme board and an invite sent for the next meeting (19 April). It was confirmed that the Best Companies survey will be carried out later this year. Complete.		
<b>07.01.23 Para 8a Para 8d</b>	Sign In System: Check if 2 mobile phones can be registered on the system for the same person Any staff training to include Board members <b>20.03.23: Update: Training on the system was underway. It was confirmed 2 numbers could be registered and the Board training was scheduled for April. Complete.</b>	BS	June 23
<b>23.03.23 Para 14</b>	Shed at Rear of Building Dust issues to be raised with Facilities team	KC	Mar 23
<b>23.03.23 Para 25</b>	Pigeonholes Current system to be looked at and revised if necessary.	KC	June 23