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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 30<sup>th</sup> October at 11.30am

### PRESENT

Peter Argyle	Bob Kinnaird (part of meeting)
Eric Baird (part of meeting)	Eleanor Mackintosh
Stuart Black	Ian MacKintosh
Geva Blackett	Anne MacLean
Duncan Bryden	Alastair MacLennan
Dave Fallows	William McKenna
Lucy Grant	Fiona Murdoch
David Green(Convener)	Gregor Rimell
Drew Hendry	Richard Stroud
Marcus Humphrey	Sue Walker

### In Attendance:

David Cameron	Elspeth Grant
Fiona Chalmers	Jane Hope
Kate Christie	Gavin Miles
Murray Ferguson	Andy Rinning
Bob Grant	Claire Ross

### Apologies:

Jaci Douglas  
Mary McCafferty  
Andrew Rafferty

### Welcome and Introduction

1. David Green welcomed everyone to the meeting in Strathdon. He introduced two officials from Audit Scotland who were sitting in on the Board meeting as spectators, as part of the Audit Scotland Study into the operation of NDPB Boards throughout Scotland.
2. There had been a successful community engagement meeting the previous evening in Glenbuchat Hall. The local community talked about the exhibition of contemporary and old photographs. There were obvious potential connections with the work by the Aberdeenshire Council Cultural Heritage section and indeed potential interest for the

Cultural Heritage Officer (Fiona McLean) who was arranging a meeting with the community.

3. The Convener drew everyone's attention to the change to the style of the agenda. The Climate Change session was now mainstreamed into the formal Board agenda in recognition of its importance.

### **Minutes of Last Meeting – approval**

4. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved subject to some minor editorial changes.

### **Matters Arising**

5. None

### **Declarations of Interest**

6. Several Members declared an interest in Paper 2 (Speyside Way). Marcus Humphrey and Dave Fallows both declared an indirect interest as directors on COAT (Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust); Stuart Black declared an indirect interest as a Director of Explore Abernethy. These three interests were indirect and did not require the individuals to leave the discussion. Alastair MacLennan declared an interest as a land manager over whom the Speyside Way route ran and decided as a precautionary measure to withdraw from the discussion.

### **National Park Plan Mid-Term Health Check (Paper 1)**

7. Gavin Miles introduced the paper which updated the Board on the results and implications of the mid-term health check of the National Park Plan delivery. This assessment of how well outcomes were being delivered at the half way stage of the Plan had been prepared over the summer through discussion with Partners. Overall the conclusion was that around three quarters of the outcomes were on course to be achieved. The remainder had some uncertainty over them which was not unexpected given their complexity. So overall there was no serious mismatch between the goals set and the likelihood of these being achieved. The key implications for the CNPA from this review were set out at Paragraph 48.
8. The second half of the paper sought the Board's approval to the arrangements for new forums on land management and sustainable tourism following the decision in May 2009 to change the format of previous advisory forums.
9. The substantial points made in discussion were as follows:
  - a) The wording of Paragraph 48(d) could be misinterpreted as suggesting that the CNPA felt it should be withdrawing its efforts on affordable housing. In reality, that paragraph was trying to reflect the need to be realistic about what the CNPA could actually bring about, and its major opportunity for this was implementing the Local Plan and the Sustainable Design Guide, and making the most of opportunities for innovative demonstration projects in doing this. It was

agreed that the CNPA has an important role to play in influencing others, for example engaging with public sector partners who held land and who could make this available cheaply to enable affordable housing. So while the wording at 48(d) was essentially correct, this needed to make more explicit that the CNPA had an important role in influencing others.

- b) While there was obviously some overlap in terms of delivering the various outcomes, it was not felt that any of the outcomes were contradictory to the extent that in delivering one there would be a negative impact on delivering others.
- c) The National Park Plan mid-term health check was presented in the same format as the original National Park Plan i.e. in relation to seven priorities for action. A separate exercise had been done to show how these outcomes in the National Park Plan could be mapped onto the fifteen National Outcomes, so in reporting on delivery of the National Park Plan it was possible to show how CNPA was also delivering on those fifteen Scottish Government Outcomes.
- d) Updates were sought on progress with the web portal and the tourism marketing strategy – these were both in hand and intended for completion within the financial year; opportunities were being sought to use the recently proposed Learning and Teaching Scotland post to help deliver on outdoor learning and rural training and skills opportunities.
- e) A number of adjustments were suggested in respect of the table at paragraph 62, notably that representation of tourism businesses on the sustainable tourism forum should be such as to ensure good geographical representation; the importance of having business participation on the land management group, and by the same token having land managers on the tourism group was also mentioned to avoid groupings becoming too insular.

#### 10. The recommendations of the paper were approved as follows:

- a) **The Board agreed the proposed focus for the Priorities for Action for the remaining two and a half years of this National Park Plan but subject to the CNPA role in housing as set out in Paragraph 48 (b) being modified to make explicit the role of the CNPA in influencing others who had a substantial and more direct role in providing for affordable housing.**
- b) **The Board agreed the proposed format for the sustainable tourism and land management forums subject to the point made at Paragraph 9(e).**

*[Bob Kinnaird and Eric Baird joined the meeting]*

#### **Management Arrangements for the Speyside Way (Paper 2)**

*[Alastair MacLennan left the meeting for this item]*

- 11. Bob Grant and Murray Ferguson introduced the paper which proposed new management arrangements for that part of the Speyside Way within the Cairngorms National Park that would take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. At the meeting on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2009 the Board had noted the conclusions of the review commissioned by the CNPA of the current management arrangements for the Speyside Way; that paper had also noted that once an additional review, a best value review led by Moray Council, was complete

there would be a further paper to the CNPA Board seeking a decision on future arrangements for managing the Speyside Way within the National Park. The best value review had been completed and discussed by the Speyside Way Management Group who reached a broad consensus on the favoured method of managing the route in the future. There was broad agreement that the current arrangements for managing the Speyside Way had to change. The paper presented four options with the recommendation that option 4 should be pursued. This would entail the management of the route within each area being achieved through each authority taking on the functions of route management within their respective area. But in addition to this each authority would make a contribution to certain whole route functions such as marketing activity and visitor information.

12. The paper was therefore seeking approval in principle that the CNPA withdrew from the current agreement with Moray Council and developed a partnership approach with Highland Council to that part of the route within the National Park and also within Highland Council, whilst also contributing a modest shared resource to whole route functions. The paper sought this approval in principle, with delegation of the detailed financial approval to the Finance Committee once discussions with partners had concluded over the unresolved issues of detail.
13. The substantial points made in discussion were as follows:
  - a) The matter of legal responsibility for the Speyside Way route was unclear. The current position reflected the consequences of SNH's withdrawal of funding some years previously; the widespread assumption at that time that the Land Reform Act conferred legal responsibility on the Park Authority, a point which had subsequently been challenged; the fact that Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority had taken on responsibility for the West Highland Way. Against this background, taking yet further legal advice at considerable cost to the CNPA seemed poor use of funds.
  - b) There had been no shortage of discussion, both at the Speyside Way Management Group and between officers. But there was certainly agreement that the current management arrangements were not sustainable and had to change. The figures presented at Paragraphs 19 and 20 were illustrative only in order to make clear the validity of changing the current arrangements. Discussion on the detail of the future financial arrangements was not appropriate in the full Board meeting and were to be left to officers to take forward and to seek approval from the Finance Committee to their conclusions.
  - c) The Tomintoul spur was not formally adopted as part of the long distance route and was therefore not relevant to this discussion which was specifically about the Speyside Way as a long distance route (to which statutory provisions applied). Neither would the agreement set any precedent in respect of the Deeside Way which also was not a long distance route.
  - d) Figures for usage of the whole Speyside Way were relatively low, albeit usage in relations to sections of the route was relatively high. It was therefore important to see this route in the context of the wider path network within the Core Path Plan. It was recommended that the CNPA should regularly review management arrangements of the Speyside Way, on a three year cycle, to keep this matter under consideration.

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

- a) **The Board approved the conclusions of the Speyside Way Management Group on the favoured approach to future management;**
- b) **The Board noted the management had potential cost implications from the proposed changes;**
- c) **The Board approved in principle that the CNPA withdraw from the current agreement with Moray Council and develop a partnership approach with Highland Council for that part of the route within the National Park whilst also contributing a modest shared resource for the whole route function;**
- d) **Delegated detailed financial approval to the Finance Committee on conclusion of discussions with partners over the unresolved issues, but with the requirement that a report from the Finance Committee came back to the Board upon that conclusion; and**
- e) **CNPA to build in to any new arrangements a requirement for the CNPA to undertake a three yearly review of those arrangements.**

*[Alastair MacLennan returned to the meeting]*

### **Park for All Update: CNPA Disability Equality Scheme Three Year Review (Paper 3)**

15. Elspeth Grant and Kate Christie introduced the paper which delivered the statutory requirement for the organisation to provide a three yearly review of the CNPA Disability Equality Scheme. The paper reviewed the past three years and what the CNPA had achieved against the aims set by the Scottish Government in regards to disability, and look forward at the proposed work that would be building on those achievements in future years.

16. The substantial points made in discussion were as follows:

- a) There were a number of areas in which the CNPA could use its influence to require more explicit demonstration from others of a commitment to equality. For example, it could be made a condition of future grant aid support, and although the use of the Brand. Bob Kinnaird (Chair of the Brand Management Group) agreed to consider this further within the Brand Management Group. He noted that the challenge was where to set the bar and how to monitor.
- b) In the same vein, it was noted that the CNPA should be raising awareness with the business sector of the strong economic arguments for recognising the needs of the disabled. The current visitor survey should help identify useful data.

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

- a) **Acknowledged the progress made on implementing the DES Action Plan in the past three years;**
- b) **Agreed with the additional actions being proposed in the DES (2009-12) that build on the previous action plan;**
- c) **Noted the requirement for three year reviews of the CNPA's Gender Equality Scheme and Race Equality Scheme in June 2010 and noted the single equality duty coming into force in 2011 covering all six equality strands.**

## **Long-Term Resource Planning (Paper 4)**

18. This was an information paper. It was noted that while the draft settlement for 2010/11 may be “flat lined”, all the indications were that financial settlements in years beyond this could be extremely tight and it was quite appropriate for the CNPA to be planning now in preparation for this likelihood.

## **The Landscape Framework (Paper 5)**

19. This was an information paper. It was noted at Paragraph 23 that any Members wishing to be part of an advisory group to help and advise staff with the progress of this project should let Jane Hope know.

## **Promoting the Scottish Outdoor Access Code – Responsible Dog Ownership (Paper 6)**

20. This was an information paper. The proposal for the campaign was welcomed and a number of detailed comments made suggesting that while the thrust was to ensure greater compliance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, the messages put across should be specific to the needs of Cairngorms National Park.

## **Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and Climate Change Delivery Plan**

21. Jane Hope introduced the Paper which provided an overview of the main provisions of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act and the Scottish Government’s Climate Change Delivery Plan, and highlighted the likely implications of both of these for the work of the CNPA. The paper was for discussion, and the following points were made:
- a) A plethora of “non-science” existed and care was needed in working out sensible and efficient responses to the challenge of reducing carbon emissions. In terms of the areas of work identified by the Climate Change Delivery Plan (Paragraph 19) it might not make sense to try and influence the short-term carbon cycle, but it might be possible to have an impact on long-term carbon stores.
  - b) Public engagement was potentially a key role for the CNPA, but it was important to understand audiences and their underlying beliefs in order to change behaviour. It was essential to target particular audiences and to maximise “leverage” by using others to help to get messages across (e.g. businesses who could then change the behaviour of their customers).
  - c) Schools were a crucial audience where the CNPA could have an impact, enhancing the schemes and programmes that were already in place (e.g. eco-schools, sponsorship awards).
  - d) To have a real impact the CNPA needed to be aspirational and ambitious. In some cases, for example in planning, these aspirations tended to be constrained by other factors. There was scope to influence others in order to free up these constraints and enable the CNPA to be more radical.
  - e) For example, planning permissions could require a proportion of energy to be provided from renewable sources within the development. Further, there was scope to harness the perception and expectation that a National Park should be leading the way on mitigation of climate change. In other words, harness the

public support to be bolder and more aspirational and set and follow higher standards.

- f) The Land Use Strategy was potentially very important for the National Park and was something the CNPA should get involved in. The danger with such a strategy set centrally was that in trying to solve one problem, another could be created.
- g) Climate change was such a huge challenge that the CNPA had to focus its efforts on a limited number of actions where it could really have an impact. There was a good argument for schools being such a focus of activity for work on public engagement. Encouraging people to be more efficient in many small ways could also be appropriate.

22. In conclusion, the Deputy Convener summed up by suggesting that the work set out at Paragraph 23(a) to (e) was all agreed as appropriate, with there being considerable support for further work on public engagement as set out at Paragraph (d). In respect of the sectors set out at Paragraph 19 further consideration was needed to see where the CNPA should best direct its efforts.

### **Low Carbon Cairngorms**

23. Fiona Chalmers introduced the paper in the absence of Hamish Trench. The paper outlined a proposed approach to take forward the low carbon National Park aspiration agreed by the Board in July 2009, and considered the short and the longer term actions. The paper was for discussion, and the following points were made:

- a) Work on changing behaviour needed greater clarity on audiences – these were not the same thing as sectors. Audiences could range from those who were very willing to change, and those who were adamantly opposed, with some in the middle; resources needed to be carefully targeted. The CNPA also needed to be careful not to supplant the activities of others but to complement and add to these.
- b) The CNPA had to consider very carefully how it could make a difference. It had a number of tools at its disposal – planning was an important tool for changing behaviour provided it was used wisely; the provision of funding was also a potential tool if sustainability issues were factored in to the conditions attached to funding.
- c) There was some discussion about the proposal for a conference at Paragraph 9. Depending on how it was run, a large conference involving a large amount of travel was just not compatible with reducing carbon emissions. The conference had to be a low carbon conference and be a demonstrator of good practice. The outcomes being sought from such a conference needed to be very clear. Given the concerns about getting such a conference right, it was suggested that any proposals should be brought back to the Board.

### **AOCB**

24. There was to be a Parliamentary debate on National Parks on the 4<sup>th</sup> November.

25. It was noted that the Grantown CNPA Office had now received a Gold award under the GTBS Scheme (it previously held a silver award).

26. The Deputy Convener drew to the Board's attention the report to the Board of the Audit Committee at the previous meeting and flagged up that the internal auditors had emphasised the need to be clearer about aims and objectives of projects in order to be better able to determine their success.
27. David Cameron sought the approval of the Board to delegating to the Finance Committee approval of grant towards the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust led Mountain Heritage Project. The funding request was expected to be in the region of £50,000 per year for four years and, with a total of around £200,000 would ordinarily come to the full Board to consider. However, a decision was required by the end of November to fit with deadlines for European Regional Development Fund support. It was expected that the CNPA funding would help lever-in up to £1.8m to the Park to support this project from a variety of other funders. The Board agreed to delegate authority for deciding on this matter to its Finance Committee.
28. In taking forward the outcome of the Scottish National Park Strategic Review, the Scottish Government were now consulting on a proposal to reduce the size of the CNPA Board. This consultation would conclude in January 2010 and would be followed by a further consultation on a Draft Designation Order which would be the legislative vehicle for making the change to Board size as well as the change to the Southern Boundary to include part of Perth and Kinross. That Designation Order was expected to be laid before the Scottish Parliament in time for approval by the end of June 2010. Changes would take effect 1 October 2010.
29. The round up of activity by Members was as follows:
  - a) The Convener had attended the ANPA (Association of National Park Authorities) conference in Snowdonia in September. He noted that the 4<sup>th</sup> Aim of Scottish National Parks was an obvious distinction between Scottish and other UK Parks. The conference had been useful for learning about the experience from other National Park Authorities, but also to be able to contribute the Scottish experience. The Convener had also attended a conference of the Scottish Crofting Foundation.
  - b) Duncan Bryden had also attended the ANPA conference and also noted a sense of many of the other National Park Authorities being interested in learning from the experience of the Cairngorms. He had also attended an SRPBA conference; an Outdoor Events meeting held by the CNPA to seek views on outdoor events in the National Park; had attended the Innovation Conference in Aviemore. He noted in respect of the latter that one participant had been critical of the poor Broadband coverage available at the conference centre. It was worth considering whether media connection should be included in the CNPA's Sustainable Design Guide.
  - c) Peter Argyle reported on his attendance at the Scottish Transport Awards in Glasgow where the Transport Minister had been a keynote speaker and made reference to the Cairngorms Electric Car. He also noted that Aberdeenshire Council and Highland Council had picked up an award for the best Travel to School Scheme.
  - d) Eric Baird had also attended the ANPA conference in Snowdonia; been involved in the Schools Video Presentation; and attended a Royal Society of Edinburgh



meeting in Edinburgh which was planning for an Inquiry into climate change in Scotland.

- e) Drew Hendry reported on his attendance at an SCDI event.
- f) Sue Walker had attended a Spey Catchment Management Plan meeting in September and noted the need to find an independent Chair for this group.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

30. Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010 at Boat of Garten Community Hall.