
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING held at the Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey on Friday 31st August 2012 at 11.30am

PRESENT

Peter Argyle
Duncan Bryden
Angela Douglas
Jaci Douglas
Katrina Farquhar
David Green (Convener)
Kate Howie

Marcus Humphrey
Eleanor Mackintosh
Ian MacKintosh
Willie McKenna
Gordon Riddler
Gregor Rimell
Brian Wood

In Attendance:

Will Boyd-Wallis
Stephen Corcoran
David Cameron
Jane Hope
Murray Ferguson

Fiona McLean
Sandra Middleton
Gavin Miles
Justin Prigmore
Francoise van Buuren

Apologies:

Dave Fallows
Gregor Hutcheon
Mary McCafferty

Martin Price
Allan Wright

Closed Session

1. The Board met in confidential session to consider the arrangements and criteria for the recruitment of the new Chief Executive.

Welcome and Introduction

2. David Green welcomed everyone to the Meeting noting that it would be his last meeting in the Chair after six years as Convener of the Cairngorms National Park

Authority. He introduced Holly McAuly-Brand to the Board noting that she was newly recruited as an apprentice in the administrative section. He also noted that Mary McCafferty remained unable to attend Board meetings for the moment while she was awaiting news of a possible operation.

Minutes of Last Meeting – approval

3. The minutes were approved subject to some minor editorial changes. It was also noted that the Board had agreed that Allan Wright would temporarily sit on the Finance Committee in the absence of Mary McCafferty.

Matters Arising

4. Matters arising were:
 - a) Paragraph 15: David Green, Eleanor Mackintosh, and Gregor Hutcheon had expressed interest in sitting on the Brand Development Group.
 - b) In response to a question it was noted that the Economic Forum had not yet met.
 - c) Paragraph 19: the Finance Committee had discussed that morning how to ensure good governance on capital made available at short notice for “shovel ready” projects. The additional capital from the Scottish Government was extremely welcome and there was no shortage of sound investments which could be made in the National Park with this money. The issue was merely to ensure that there was good governance in place for the decisions on these projects.
 - d) Paragraph 23: there was encouraging news about the proposed withdrawal by the Scottish Qualifications Authority of the Environmental SVQ and there were signs that the decision was likely to be reversed.

Declarations of Interest

5. None

Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Paper 1)

6. Will Boyd-Wallis introduced the paper which provided an update on the current working draft of the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan and sought the Board’s approval for the next steps towards launching both the Plan and the new partnership intended to drive it forward. The Plan as drafted had been subject to consultation with a range of partners and species experts. The focus of the Plan was on habitat enhancements, in particular woodlands and wetlands. The concept of the wildlife partnership had been discussed previously by the Board. The intention of the partnership was to bring in additional funding from other sources to enable the delivery

of the LBAP. As part of this the smaller core management group would be instrumental in reinvigorating interest in biodiversity in the Cairngorms National Park. It was noted that the current LBAP had many achievements to its name such as the reintroduction of fresh water pearl mussel, the wildcat project, and biodiversity grants etc.

7. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) Biodiversity was acknowledged as a very important collection of issues for the Cairngorms National Park.
- b) Particular issues were raised such as the spread of bracken and ragwort. It was noted as important that amongst other things the new Wildlife Partnership started to consider what could be done about these. Control of invasive species was a particular issue in the LBAP.
- c) The importance of working with partners such as SNH was noted, in particular that the SNH responsibility for qualifying features of designated sites, was looked at alongside the broader changes in biodiversity in the National Park. It was important that the Wildlife Partnership worked across the whole of the National Park and did not just concentrate on designated sites.
- d) References in the Plan to creating networks did not necessarily imply continuous coverage – even islands could contribute to linking up populations of, for example, Aspen.
- e) The new LBAP and the new partnership provided an opportunity for the CNPA to discuss with the Scottish Government how farms could help delivery of biodiversity by the SRDP. In this respect it was noted that NFUS should be approached to sit on the management group.
- f) Suggestions were made about the membership of the management group. It was good to see DFT (Deeside Fisheries Trust) proposed. Scottish Environment LINK were also seen as important although it was noted that two members were already on the group. It was essential to keep the management group tight and very effective; for this it needed keen enthusiastic individuals who were prepared to move things forward. The local authorities had indicated they were content that the management group did not include them, but they would be on the partnership.
- g) The partnership group would meet next on the 22nd September and it would be up to them to choose a name, although Cairngorms Nature appeared to be the favoured title.
- h) A Wildlife Partnership Manager was to be created as a three year post. The intention was that the partnership would become freestanding in due course and the employment of the partnership manager would then become a matter for the Trust, not the CNPA.

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

- a) **Agreed the proposed process for completing the LBAP Review;**
- b) **Approved the proposed makeup of the new LBAP partnership, subject to suggestions made during discussion.**

Delivering the Curriculum for Excellence through the Cairngorms National Park (Paper 2)

9. Claire Ross introduced the paper which updated Board Members on the work that had been done in delivering the Curriculum for Excellence through the Cairngorms National Park with a wide range of partners; and sought agreement to the proposed work package that would continue this work 2012-2015. The intention was that the CNPA would play less of a leading role in the Outdoor Learning Project but would continue to support. The proposal was that the Outdoor Learning Project continue and that the Development Officer post be extended by a further year with a contribution of £8,000 from the CNPA. The momentum of the Project would be taken forward by the Steering Group. A three year action plan would be developed which focused on the local authorities embedding the National Parks in their work.

10. From 2013 the CNPA would continue to support the John Muir Award, Junior Rangers, the Media Project and National Park Schools Project. It would seek to promote educational materials which had already been developed and monitor how well these were being used. Looking ahead, the work in the area of education would be linked more closely to the emerging approach to skills development and training.

11. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) The work and the paper were commended. It was noted that work on outdoor learning was patchy across the area of the National Park. The uptake of opportunities was very dependent on individual enthusiasm of local authorities and head teachers. It was important to continue to work to ensure that all children could benefit, and in this respect it was important to continue to look at any additional support that was needed to remove barriers. This often took the form of transport which was being dealt with in some local authorities, such as Aberdeenshire, very effectively.
 - b) It was important to ensure that this project continued. The success had depended very much on the Development Officer and yet the proposal was to only extend this post by one more year. The question was asked whether this should be extended beyond 2013. It was noted that the project was hosted by Education Scotland but remained to be seen whether extending the post further was feasible. Nevertheless, there was a good steering group in place and it was important that maintained the enthusiasm and drive behind this project.
 - c) There was some discussion about how to assess “impact” of a project like this. Reactions to individual events were monitored but it was noted that longer term impact was much more difficult to assess. Some thought was being given to gathering anecdotal evidence from participants.
 - d) As part of a discussion about evaluating impact it was noted that the project needed to have very clear aims at the start. Issues such as: who is

participating, and is this a spread or rather narrow; what do the customers think?; are we getting more engagement and more achievement?.

- e) This had been a very good project and there was clearly some reluctance about the CNPA “letting go”. However, this represented the usual model for the CNPA’s approach, namely putting resources into developing into a new idea and getting a project to a state where the other participants could then take it forward as a freestanding piece of work. It was now time to leave it to local authorities and others to keep the momentum of this project going forward. Clearly it was therefore be important to monitor progress and this was a role for the steering group.
- f) The project was about learning in, not learning about the outdoors.
- g) The importance of transport should not be underestimated. Outdoor learning opportunities are not on the doorstep for most people. A partnership approach to this would be worth pursuing. It was noted that SNH helped to fund this in the Aberdeenshire area.

12. The Convener summed as follows:

- a) The Outdoor Learning Project had been successful and staff were congratulated.
- b) This had been an excellent project, starting from nothing and becoming a partnership of nine. The danger was that the enthusiasm would drain out of it without a considerable drive and enthusiasm from the partners.
- c) Local authority champions were essential in this respect.
- d) Measuring impact was essential but also very difficult particularly with so much happening. The feeling that the project had been a success needed to be backed up by robust measures.
- e) Further updates to the Board would be welcome.

13. The Board agreed the recommendations of the paper as follows:

- a) **Noted the extensive work that had been carried out in delivering the Curriculum for Excellence through the Cairngorms National Park since October 2010;**
- b) **Agreed to the proposed work package that would continue this work 2012-2015.**

CNPA Approach to Community Engagement and Support (Paper 3)

14. Claire Ross introduced the paper which outlined the existing support that the CNPA gave to communities within the National Park; noted the challenges that faced communities in the future; and to endorse the recommendations for the CNPA’s future role. The CNPA’s approach in the future was outlined in paragraphs 13 to 23. Particular attention was drawn to paragraph 20 proposing that in the current difficult financial climate it was important to focus resources where one could ensure the greatest impact. There should be a commitment for all communities to benefit from the fact that they are situated within the Cairngorms National Park; however, as recent

examples had shown (Tomintoul and Glenlivet, Ballater, Boat of Garten) there were times when an enhanced level of support was appropriate and this needed to be properly focused. The criteria for these could be wide ranging but could include a community under threat, a community where there was an overriding issue, or a community that had developed a very effective delivery mechanism and that had the capacity to generate more complex projects to benefit the wider area. If this was agreed, the proposal was to bring papers back to the Finance Committee to agree individual proposals as these emerged.

15. In discussion the following points were made:

- a) This approach was commended. The role of the CNPA would vary according to each community and its needs and capacity. For example, there were instances where there were a lot of individual groupings in the community and these needed to be coordinated in order to be more effective. The CNPA had played a useful role in some of these instances. The challenge was always knowing when to step back.
- b) Community Development Officer (Paragraph 18) involvement was critical and acted as a catalyst in a community.
- c) It was important to link all this work to the works of the Community Planning Partnerships. It was essential to ensure that community networks in the wider sense were acknowledged.
- d) The enhanced role for Board Members was noted and welcomed.
- e) Measuring impact and success, as with the previous paper, was difficult. Nevertheless it was noted that stories to illustrate successes in individual communities were a very useful way of communicating to others what was possible. It was important to look at these successes and analyse what the factors were that contributed to this. In this respect it was noted that the work in the Cairngorms National Park, and particularly the work of the CNPA and its partners, had been cited in a number of reports (e.g. the case study in the Christie Report).
- f) The question was asked what success would look like – was there an end point? This clearly required a lot of thought but in brief one answer might be that success would be when communities were themselves applying for funding and were no longer depending on public agencies to do this for them. This was the vision set out in Paragraph 13 in which the role of the CNPA was articulated as being “to help communities to become fit for purpose, encouraging a much more joined up approach with the skills and confidence to meet these challenges.”

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

- a) **Noted with approval the considerable work already carried out in relation to community engagement and support;**
- b) **Agreed the proposals for CNPA’s approach to community engagement and support in the future;**

- c) **Agreed that the Community Support and Education Programme Manager should submit a paper to the next Finance Committee outlining the detailed resource implications for implementing this approach for 2013 to 2015.**

Proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill (Paper 4)

17. Francoise van Buuren introduced the paper which informed Board Members of the background and general content of the Scottish Government Consultation Document on the proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill, and sought agreement to a proposed response. The Scottish Government and CoSLA were looking at how to improve community planning and were conducting a consultation which was looking for a step change. The two National Park Authorities did not sit on any of the local authority Community Planning Partnerships – in each case this would mean an NPA sitting on four or five different CPPs. Nevertheless, National Parks were places where the National Park Authorities were essential drivers in delivering at local level the aspirations of Community Planning Partnerships and in bringing the collaborative approaches together to do this. The review therefore provided a real opportunity to demonstrate how the collaborative approach taken in Scottish National Parks is helping to deliver better outcomes in local communities and gain increased support from public sector partners for the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plans. It was also an opportunity to support the vision outlined in the previous paper for how the Public Sector should provide community support which aimed to help communities to do things for themselves. The recommendation was therefore to make three broad points as set out at Paragraph 15.
18. In discussion it was noted that while there was broad agreement on the recommendations, it was noted that in 15(a) that there was no wish for National Park authorities to have a statutory duty to be active partners in the community planning process – rather the point to be made was that we were looking for a set of arrangements that reinforced the requirement for partners to work with the National Park Authority to deliver the National Park Plan.
19. **The Board agreed the recommendations of the paper as set out at Paragraph 15 with the amendment to 15(a) as described.**
- i. **Community Planning Partnerships operating within National Parks should have a statutory duty to fully incorporate the National Park Partnership Plan and associated Local Development Plan as the basis for their integrated plans focused on ‘place’ that affect communities within the Park.**
 - ii. **The community planning process should include a requirement to support the delivery of the Land Use Strategy when developing their integrated plans for ‘place’. This will ensure environmental requirements are taken into account to allow for sustainable economic**

growth which balances the needs of the community, environment and the economy.

- iii. National Park Partnership Plans are integrated plans for ‘place’ and have a strong emphasis on bringing public, private and voluntary organisations and individuals to work together to deliver improved outcomes. Community engagement and planning processes have played an essential role in preparing these plans. The approach taken in the Cairngorms National Park should be used to inform the consultation on how to empower communities, reinvigorate participation and how legislation can build on and promote best practice, remove barriers and provide a framework of support where necessary. An excellent example of how this has been delivered is the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust and regeneration plan.**

Proposed Common Good Fund for the Cairngorms National Park (Paper 5)

20. David Cameron introduced the paper which sought agreement in principle to establishing a “Common Good Fund” for the Cairngorms National Park. It was noted this was in effect just raising the issue for further discussion, and further discussion and further work was needed in consultation with others with an interest, as there were other strands of work attempting to do something similar. The proposed “Common Good Fund” needed to be complementary to the other activities. So this was very much initial thinking. The purpose of the paper was to seek the Board’s agreement to taking forward this point of principal and then come back to the Board when a way forward was clearer. At that point further information could be assembled on the legal form of whatever structure might be needed; the current paper illustrated how this could be based on the legal structure of a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) but this was not exclusive and was provided merely for illustration.
21. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a) A degree of realism was needed about where the funds might come from and what they might amount to. It would be essential to ensure that whatever structure was set up that the administrative costs were not greater than the income. It was very difficult to predict what the income might be. But it was noted at present there was something of a gap in the market, namely for legacies and corporate social responsibility monies. The aim was to ensure that there was something in place to allow these sorts of donations but in a way that was mutually supportive to other organisations that were also seeking voluntary donations.
 - b) It was noted as a good idea but one which needed further work. Caution was needed over the amount of effort that might be required to get corporate social responsibility funding in place. It would be important to keep the notion of this Common Good Fund simple and to minimise overheads otherwise the resource

needed for active management would outweigh the benefits from the income. It was important not to reinvent the wheel and to fully assess other mechanisms that were available for voluntary giving. It was also noted that community engagement was important at a very early stage. The Finance Committee had considered this paper at their meeting earlier in the day. The suggestion was that further work should continue in consultation with other interested parties and that the Finance Committee should have oversight of how these discussions progressed and on how the detail then was developed on how a fund might work in practice. Final proposals would then be brought back to the Board in due course. Any such paper would need to set out the pros and cons of various options.

- c) The term “Common Good Fund” was not particularly helpful as it carried implications of common good law. An alternative name was desirable.

22. The Board agreed the recommendations of the paper as follows:

- a) **Agreed the principle of establishing a Common Good Fund.**
- b) **The Finance Committee should oversee further work to develop the thinking on the principle and work up proposals for practical implementation, having consulted with interested parties.**
- c) **A further paper to be brought back to the Board in due course once there was a firm proposal to be considered.**
- d) **Agreed that interim arrangements should be set up so that a separate bank account was available to hold any receipts and donations made prior to fully establishing a fund, with the administration of those interim arrangements to be undertaken by the Chair of the Finance Committee, Chief Executive and Corporate Services Director.**

Landscape Partnership (Paper 6)

- 23. Fiona MacLean introduced the paper which formed the basis for discussion on progress with the Landscape Partnership Bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and seek a steer on the content of the application. Following the decision to adopt Tomintoul and Glenlivet as the landscape of choice for the Landscape Partnership Programme, a series of scoping workshops had been held with CNPA staff, the communities and potential partners. A number of key issues were emerging as the focus for the bid and potential project were being identified to address these issues. These were set out in the Annex to the paper. The plan was to submit the scheme to the HLF in September at which point an HLF officer would be allocated to the bid and would oversee this until the final submission in 2013. It was noted that the emerging structure of the bid as shown in the Annex to the paper was still work in progress and costings indicative.
- 24. In discussion the point was made that there had been a huge amount of partner and community involvement and Fiona MacLean was commended for her efforts in making the workshops happen. Nevertheless it was also noted that there was so much

happening in Glenlivet and Tomintoul, the boundaries between projects was getting blurred. That needed to be taken into account as the bid was taken forward. It remained essential that there was total community involvement and backing when the bid was taken to the next level. The capacity in Tomintoul and Glenlivet within the community to deal with this sort of project had been built up considerably in recent times. The point was also made that baseline measures were needed so that the success of programmes could be measured against the desired outcomes. It was important to know where a project had started from, so you could measure the progress made.

- 25. The Board noted with approval the emerging Framework for the Landscape Partnership Bid. Any individual comments from Board Members would be put to the Community Heritage Officer directly.**

The Legacy of the Cairngorms Wildcat Project (Paper 7)

26. This paper was for information only. The final report was now on the website. The Board formally recorded their recognition of the contribution made by David Hetherington as the Project Officer; the project had been very much driven by his force of personality and his undoubted expertise, and it was his personal contribution that was a big factor in the undoubted success of this project when measured by public engagement.

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27. David Green noted for the Board's information a number of engagements he had taken part in:
- a) He had met Angela Constance (Minister for Skills) who had been impressed with the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust work in developing training for house building skills;
 - b) He had attended the opening of the new Strathdon Bridge with Denis Robertson MSP and noted that this was an example of a piece of work that would simply not have happened without the CNPA and COAT partnership;
 - c) Attended the Grantown Show;
 - d) Attended the Queen's Garden Party at Balmoral;
 - e) Had met Stuart Housden of the RSPB;
 - f) Had attended one of the Junior Rangers sessions.
28. Duncan Bryden had attended the formal opening of the Glen Tanar Visitor Centre and noted the credit given to the CNPA for their involvement in this work.
29. Marcus Humphrey had been involved in representations made on the SVQ (mentioned earlier in the meeting); attended the opening of the Strathdon Bridge; attended the board meeting of COAT.

30. Kate Howie noted the affordable housing event taking place in Blair Atholl in September.
31. Willie McKenna reported on his attendance at an event where the CEO of HIE had emphasised the growth of new businesses creating a need for more housing.
32. Eleanor Mackintosh reported on her attendance at a visit to the Cairngorms National Park of Scottish Government officials to discuss the re-greening of the CAP. The point had been made that if proposals for the next round of CAP reform took a “one-size-fits-all approach there was the potential for unwanted side effects on the landscape in a place like the Cairngorms National Park.
33. Peter Argyle noted that the Cambus O’May Creamery was now in production; he also noted his attendance at the Queen’s Garden Party at Balmoral.
34. Finally the incoming Convener Duncan Bryden acknowledged on behalf of the whole CNPA Board that this was David Green’s last meeting as Convener of the CNPA after six years in the job. On behalf of the Board he acknowledged the tremendous job David had done at the helm and the whole Board offered their thanks.

Date of Next Meeting:

35. Next formal meeting Friday 26th October, Grant Arms Hotel, Granttown-on-Spey.