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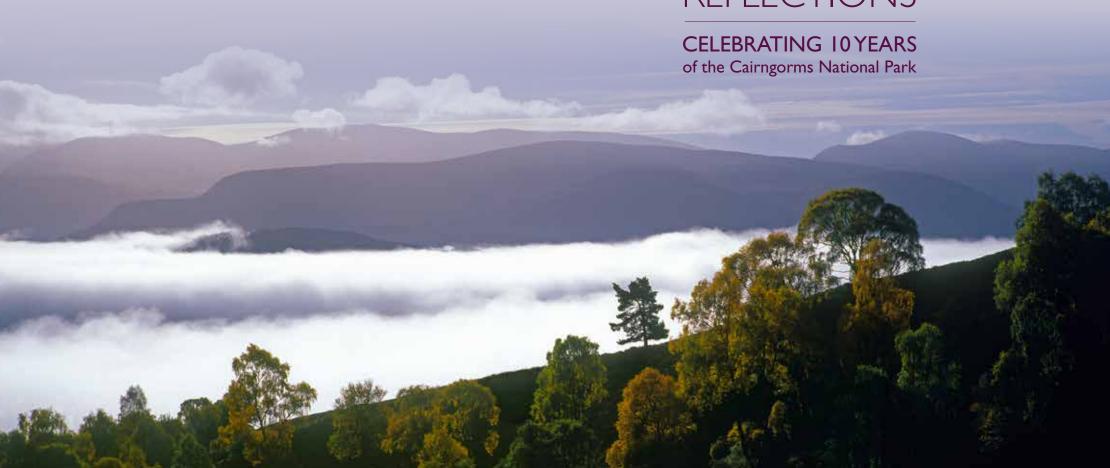


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Foreword

Celebrating 10 years as a National Park

Scotland's health and prosperity depend on the quality of our nature and landscapes. National Parks define some of our best and most special natural assets. Drawing on the past but with eyes firmly on the future, the last 10 years has seen a new model of National Park management emerge.

In the Cairngorms National Park more people can now enjoy the outdoors, especially young people and those who are disadvantaged, as this can bring real joy and benefits to their lives. In our busy 21st century lives, places like the Cairngorms National Park encourage people to undertake more physical activity – improving their mental health and well-being – while stimulating businesses and providing jobs for local people. Each year the Cairngorms National Park contributes' around £400 million to the Scottish economy.

The last decade has seen the Cairngorms
National Park become a place to trial and develop
innovative approaches to sustainable management
of high quality habitats which provide a home for
many of our iconic and endangered species.

This book of reflections considers what has been achieved during the Cairngorms National Park's first 10 years – the Park is here to stay and working together we can build on this strong foundation to benefit future generations. Nature is bound up with human culture. Pioneer US ecologist Thoreau recognised that back in 1856 when he wrote:

'It is in vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such'.



Facal-toisich

A' comharrachadh 10 bliadhna mar Phàirc Nàiseanta

Tha mathas is soirbheachadh Alba an urra ri dè cho math is a tha ar nàdar agus dreach ar tìre. Tha Pàircean Nàiseanta a' mìneachadh cuid dhen saidhbhreas nàdarrach as fheàrr is as sònraichte a th' againn. Tro bhith a' tarraing à tobar nan linntean a dh'fhalbh ach aig an aon àm a' cumail sùil air na thachras san àm ri teachd, tha cruth ùr air nochdadh sna 10 bliadhna a chaidh seachad air ciod i Pàirc Nàiseanta.

Ann am Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh a-nis, faodaidh barrachd dhaoine tlachd a thoirt às a' bhlàr a-muigh, gu h-àraid daoine òga agus iadsan aig nach eil an aon chothrom ri càch, oir bheir seo fìor aoibhneas is bhuannachd dhaibh nam beatha. Agus ar beatha cho dripeil san 2 l mh linn, bidh àiteachan mar Phàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh a' brosnachadh dhaoine gus tuilleadh eacarsaich a ghabhail os làimh — rud a bheir feabhas air an slàinte-inntinn 's air an leas — 's aig an aon àm a' brosnachadh ghnìomhachasan agus a' cruthachadh obraichean do dhaoine ionadail. Gach bliadhna, cuiridh Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruadh mu £4m ri eaconamaidh na h-Alba.

San deichead mu dheireadh tha Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh air fàs mar àite far an gabh rudan ùra fheuchainn agus far am bi dòighean ùr-ghnàthaichte air an leasachadh a thaobh stiùireadh seasmhach sàr-àrainnean, àrainnean a bheir dachaigh do mhòran dhe na gnèithean suaicheantach againn, a tha cuideachd fo chunnart.

Tha an leabhar-cnuasachaidh seo a' beachdachadh air na chaidh a thoirt a-mach ri linn ciad deichead Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh — mairidh a' Phàirc, agus le bhith ag obair còmhla faodaidh sinn cur ris a' bhonn-stèidh làidir seo air sgàth buannachd nan ginealachan ri teachd. Tha an Nàdar co-cheangailte ri dualchas mhic-an-duine. Thuig an eag-eòlaiche Ameirigeanach Thoreau, a bha air thoiseach air chàch, sin cho fada air ais ri 1856 nuair a sgrìobh e:

'Is dìomhanas aisling a thaobh fiadhachd nach buin rinn fhèin. Chan eil a leithid de rud ann'.

Scotland's unique approach to National Parks

Sarah Boyack and Jane Hope talk about the collaborative process involved in creating the new National Park legislation in 2000.



"Creating the legislation for Scotland's National Parks was not without heated debates so it felt like a major achievement when it was passed. There wasn't to use Donald Dewar's phrase, a 'settled will' in the Cairngorms, due to the many

contentious issues addressed. The process with all the interest groups was always to listen, discuss and reflect, such as visiting estates to listen to the landowners — so we heard their concerns while pointing out the real opportunities designation would bring. Through consultation the legislation was amended in a few significant ways. We paid attention to how we saw decisions being made, preparing the way for the partnership approach. By the time the Park and CNPA were established there was already a degree of trust between different groups and many practical ideas had emerged, so the broad direction was already in place. Ten years on, in the absence of measuring indicators, anecdotal evidence shows that the Park has been succeeding in its aims. That is something I am proud of and believe that we should celebrate."

Sarah Boyack MSP was the first Minister for Transport, Planning and the Environment and set up the legislation for Scotland's National Parks in 2000.



"A lot of people make their living from the wonderful environment of the Park so nature and the economy are inextricably linked, as well as people's desire for recreation, and these linkages make our National Parks different. The strong

economic and social element is, I suggest, a uniquely Scottish approach. Sustainable development and collaborative working go right the way through our legislation. The CNPA was set up to be a small organisation that works in partnership with the private, public and voluntary sector, so all have a role in making the most of the Park for the nation. For example, rather than set up a separate Park Authority ranger service, we took the approach of working with and part funding the 12 ranger services, private and public, that already existed. And we have worked closely with businesses to ensure they play a lead role in marketing and promoting the National Park. Another unique feature is that every four years, five members of the CNPA board are elected by everyone who lives in the Park. So we're all playing a part."

Jane Hope was the supporting civil servant who drafted the National Parks for Scotland legislation. Jane subsequently became CEO of the CNPA from 2003 to 2013.



Key Stats:

The land-based industry, including deer and grouse-moor management, forestry and farming in the Park accounts for at least 900 jobs and contributes a minimum of £42 million GVA to the local economy (11% of the NP total).

Over 250,000 people visit ranger bases each year.



Richard Cooke, Chairman of the Association of Deer Management Groups.

"At the outset we were concerned that the complexities of deer management and the deer economy wouldn't be understood or valued, but ten years on I'd say everyone is more relaxed about this. There has been something of a meeting of minds. In setting up the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group (CDAG) at the suggestion of the deer management groups in the area, the Park Authority has created a useful gathering point for all deer interests. It has also shown an increasing awareness of the importance of deer management to the economy of the National Park as well as to the environment. There remain a lot of inherent conflicts in the management of deer for such a wide range of different management objectives – management for stalking, for tree regeneration, grouse, commercial forestry etc., each of which require different deer densities. The important thing is that we have a mechanism for negotiation and compromise which provides a platform for diversified land use with deer being a valued feature across the whole range of habitats while contributing to the economy of the National Park. ."

A Park for the people

Andrew Thin, the first Convener of the Cairngorms National Park Authority, talks about the unique principles.



"In what sense is a National Park actually 'national'? We asked ourselves this question when the first board met. The answer was clear: it's only 'national' if it's relevant for all of Scotland's people – not just

the fit and the few. So right from the start inclusivity was one of the guiding principles, which makes us distinctive globally; elsewhere, conserving nature is an end in itself. For us, looking after nature is a means to social and economic ends, delivering real benefits for the people. We've not allowed any one group to dominate the Park's direction, our ethos has been to get everyone to work together to resolve conflicts through compromise and deliver the Park for the people of Scotland.

Ten years on, this seems to have been largely successful. Inclusivity has worked out through better bus routes, for example; more signs and information to help visitors understand what's here; and projects such as taking Big Issue sellers up from the central belt, giving them tents and kit and an activity programme so they could experience something completely different. The point is, anyone can spend £5 on a bus ticket to Aviemore and get out and enjoy it. Recreation is about people 're-creating' themselves in nature. The visitor make-up has already broadened and increased but realistically it will take 30 years before a very broad spectrum of people is coming here."



Ann Rennie used the free scooter service provided by Badenoch & Strathspey Community Transport Company in Aviemore.

"I'm a retired GP and we used to be outdoors people but I've been wheelchair bound now for three years, so using the free scooter in Glenmore Forest made me feel wonderful. Normally my husband has to push me and so to go under one's own steam for a change made my day. My husband was delighted too because he could see how liberated I was – he had to follow me for a change! Before, I've always been very envious of people who used the paths around the loch so being independent was just amazing. It was very beautiful; the trees had just come into leaf. It was so lovely to have fresh air. We're going to go back again soon."

Key Stat:

Over 18,000 people have achieved the John Muir Award of which 15% come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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Celebrating 10 Years of the Cairngorms National Park

Promoting biodiversity

Kenny Taylor is the former chair of Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan delivery group.



"The Cairngorms National Park is superb in so many ways and one of those is that it's the most important area in the UK for scarce wildlife and plants, from things as big as a Caledonian pinewood to

something as small and fascinating as a snowbed slime mould, so it's vital to consider different levels of action for biodiversity, especially because many species are internationally important. That's second nature within a National Park and part of why the Cairngorms National Park Authority's support for biodiversity has been such a boon over the past decade.

It has been great for me to work with the CNPA and others because I've learned a great deal from them and I can see how much has been achieved. Wetland waders, scarce moths, Scottish wildcats and rare flora are just some of the species that have benefited. Communities have gained from the creation of useful wildlife habitats such as ponds, surveys of plants, birds and animals and training for volunteers and what that does is boost biological recordings. Thanks to Cairngorms Nature, this work is entering a new phase. I'm looking forward to seeing how the story progresses."



Derek Calder is a Head keeper on the Edinglassie Estate.

"We run a grouse moor so predator control and habitat management is daily work. Back in the 60s there were loads of wildcats but now they're scarce and we're hoping it's not too late. The main challenge is controlling feral cats as these mate with wildcats and dilute the genes. The Cairngorms Wildcat Project has neutered many feral cats and helped us all with identification so we can tell at about 60 yards whether it's a wildcat: our policy is, if in doubt, don't shoot.

Water voles used to be numerous before American mink invaded so across the Park there's a programme to reduce the mink population; we used to catch around 20 mink a year and now it's just one or two. We're quite hopeful that, given half the chance, water voles will re-colonise areas by themselves – there's a good colony just about a kilometre off the estate and another colony was discovered on the estate earlier this year. Our habitat is ideal with slow running water, soft alluvial banks for their burrows and grass sedges and rushes to feed on."

Key Stats:

The Park is home to 25% of the UK's endangered species.

49% of the Park is internationally designated as a Natura site.

Thanks to good land management, 77% of sites in the Park are now in favourable or recovering condition for supporting threatened species.



Supporting communities

Alison Fielding and Penny Dunbar talk about their village, Boat of Garten.



"The Park has made a huge difference to quite a few projects. One is the transformative new visitor experience beside the Strathspey Steam Railway at our historic station: instead of a crumbling entrance area

we have a newly paved area with a life size metal horse and cart sculpture, a five-foot osprey feather and interpretive panels on an information hub in the style and livery of a railway carriage. We approached the National Park Authority at an early stage; they advised us to do an interpretation plan and a local artist came up with a number of landscaping ideas. Penny and her team worked their socks off and we had community consultations. The CNPA helped us to secure around £120,000 in funding. It was their partnership approach which helped the project to succeed.

Another example is the planning application for much-needed new housing: after initial rejection, and in response to community pressure, the CNPA helped us by setting up a multi-disciplinary committee that included community representatives, the landowners Seafield Estate, Scottish Natural Heritage, Highland Council Housing and housing associations. The aim was to look at how affordable housing could be achieved while protecting the capercaillie and red squirrels. After a lot of consultation there are better compromises over some tricky issues resulting in a better proposal commanding community support."





Roger Clegg chair of the Association of Cairngorms Communities.

"We are a bringing-together body for communities that are geographically far apart yet face many similar issues. The cross-fertilisation of ideas helps issues such as getting broadband, which is critical for businesses, and we're also a two-way listening ear between the Park and the people. The Planning Network has been a very good way to build understanding and ensure all views are taken into account, and Local Development Officers are also active in developing communities, increasing the profile of what can be possible. It's all about keeping populations up; we don't want rural communities to become moribund."

Key Stats:

200 more people move into the Park than move out each year with fewer young people leaving than is the norm in other rural areas across Scotland.

Community Action
Plans are in place for all
communities in the Park.

More than £14 million has been invested in community-based projects, land-based businesses and the Scottish Government's 'Shovel Ready' capital projects.

Improving economies

John Swinney, MSP for Perthshire North and Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment & Sustainable Growth.



"Very early in the creation of the Cairngorms National Park a decision was made to run the boundary line up from the Angus Glens, cutting out a comparable topographical area. A strong evidence base to the contrary

was gathered, involving local communities and others, which helped to extend the Park in 2010 to places such as Glenshee and Blair Atholl, which I always thought was the most natural entry to the Park up the A9 because of Glen Tilt. We've put a clear identity around the Park, rooted in its natural environment, and a whole host of economic opportunities are flowing out of it.

For instance, the new visitor centre at Blair Atholl. I couldn't conjure up a more appropriate example of how the Park is making a difference: it's an old building that has been given new life; it has up to date displays; it's available in a sustainable way to everyone and is set within a number of attractions. Going up through Glenshee there's an excellent business venture – a lovely pottery, it's an established business that runs well and has a café, and now thanks to the Park it has a visitor centre that gives people information in a readily tangible fashion. Another economic benefit is the magnetic effect of Cairngorms' marketing as a "must visit" destination, attracting visitors through astonishing authenticity and outstanding natural beauty. This image is a very powerful weapon for local businesses."



Sam Faircliff is Managing Director of Cairngorm Brewery, in Aviemore.

"Our company rebrand as the Cairngorm Brewery was the best decision we've ever made because customers like supporting their local beer, and the Park brand reinforces the natural qualities of our award-winning beer going into the UK, Australia, Denmark, Norway, Finland and more new overseas markets. Significantly, three of our beers are linked to nature and that also helps sales because it feels good to customers and we donate money from sales to relevant local projects: 'Wild Cat', 'Autumn Nuts' showing a red squirrel and 'Caillie' featuring the capercaillie."

Key Stat:

1.5 million visitors come to the Park each year contributing £210 million to the local economy.

A significant place

Danny Alexander MP and former Head of Communications at the Park Authority, talks about branding and the Park's international importance.



"When we created the brand it was important to represent the Park not the Authority because the Park is about something so much bigger and we wanted the brand to be something that

everyone could sign up for and feel proud of — as someone who was raised in the Highlands I'm very aware of the importance of working with the communities and the brand supports that process.

The brand is optimistic and is grounded in the Park's unique natural heritage, attracting visitors and making a statement internationally. But its greatest success is that it's used by so many people – I represent more than half the Park and you see the brand being used more and more; a brand only has value if it's used and is recognisable. We're doing something very different to other National Parks and there's a lot of international interest in the unique strong interconnection with socio-economic development; the fact that we have strong and thriving communities is certainly unusual around the world. The brand is also about saying that economic development and conservation must go hand in hand together. I didn't work for the Cairngorms National Park Authority for long before being elected as an MP and so the branding project is something I'm very proud of."





Key Stats:

235 (23% of businesses in the Park) use the Park brand and have or are working towards having Green Business plans in place.

Over half our visitors come here because it is a National Park, an increase of 25% from 2004.

Anders Esselin from 'Man and Nature', Sweden.

"I think one of the biggest challenges in implementing the European Landscape Convention is finding appropriate governance models for each given place and situation, and in this context the Cairngorms National Park is a very interesting example. My conclusion after my visit to the Cairngorms National Park is that it's a very bold, progressive and large-scale experiment in shaping a sustainable tomorrow-land, in a place of unquestionable natural beauty that has 17,000 inhabitants. It's in marked contrast with our own 29 National Parks that have no inhabitants at all."

Feeling inspired to learn

Alison Hammerton, who worked as the Development Officer for the Outdoor Learning with the National Parks in Scotland project, talks about the difference it makes to young people to learn outside, surrounded by nature.



"Learning in the outdoors on any topic or subject, using the whole body and all the senses, transforms learning experiences and helps whatever is learned to stay in the memory – outdoor learning helps make learning real and more relevant. It's

also great for self-confidence and group dynamics – young people bond more easily and tend to be more deeply engaged when they're doing tasks outdoors. The Outdoor Learning with the National Parks project has helped to increase teachers' and schools' capacity and confidence to take learning outdoors. The programme called 'Inspiring landscapes, inspiring learning' features annual senior pupil residential weeks and teacher professional learning weekends. These are linked together in the same venue in one or the other National Park. The young people experience a blend of personal development and leadership challenges and at the end of their week they present their learnings to the teachers who have just arrived for their own development weekend – so the teachers see live examples of the difference the National Parks can make to the young people.

Other examples include resources on websites, features on radio and magazines, travel grants to help schools visit the Parks, and raising awareness of the many opportunities and benefits of working with ranger services, local educational charities and partner providers."



Hannah Scott, age 15, a young Park resident, John Muir recipient and Junior Ranger.

"I've got so much out of doing the John Muir Award and being a Junior Ranger. I got to go abroad and have met so many people, and one day all this will help me for my future with references on my CV. Everything we've done is so different and you see and learn stuff and you don't expect it to happen. In Glen Tanar we set up camera traps for badgers and learnt about how they sleep during the day and hunt at night, and at Balmoral we cut down a rhododendron bush that was taking away butterflies' habitat. In the snow we learnt how to use snowshoes and find people in avalanches and it was just after people had been killed in avalanches in the Cairngorms so that felt really important — now I know I can't just go out walking in the snow and expect to be fine. At other times I've even learnt which tree I could use to brush my teeth!"



Key Stats:

Education Scotland now promotes Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning in the National Parks with all schools across Scotland.

136 young people have completed a 5 day Junior Ranger Programme.

94% of pupils who took part in the National Parks Media Project said they would like to experience more outdoor learning both in school and in their community.

The challenge of living in a place of outstanding beauty

Duncan Bryden, Park Authority Convener, talks about the collaborative approach the Park takes.



"Running down from the pristine arctic Cairngorms plateau are five of Scotland's major rivers, the Don, Dee, Spey, Tay and North Esk, and living around these rivers is 25% of Britain's threatened wildlife – but most people in the Park also

live there so it makes development not impossible but restricted, especially as a big chunk is designated under European laws to protect rare species... and all this is complicated by the fact that 75% of the Park is owned by long-standing landowners with differing priorities. By contrast, other National Parks worldwide are wholly owned by the state and have few people living there. This is why working together is an extremely important aspect of our model. We get the different parties together in a pre-application discussion and you get this almost cathartic effect of the landowner, the ecologist, the planner, the community, the transport people, and the developer all sitting down together.

Watersheds are a great example of joined up thinking and sustainable solutions. The warming climate is on the verge of making the Dee too warm for wild salmon to survive, so planting native trees around the water is providing shade, and putting dead trees back reintroduces meanders, and all this cools the water, protects the £15 million angling industry, encourages biodiversity and acts as flood control for people downstream. Just as with affordable housing, we get everybody round the table, and by doing that we get the results and a solution that makes sense for everyone."



Donald Lockhart of Albyn Housing Society talks about their successes in the Park.

"There are so many important habitats and species in the Park, but the shortage of affordable housing means it's necessary to get the balance right so that the Park is a place where people can live and prosper whilst the outstanding natural heritage is conserved. The Park cannot be pickled in aspic, so to speak. Although I applaud the Park Authority for enabling development to happen, we must keep in mind the tension between development and conservation. Albyn Housing Society is part of the voluntary housing movement which helps less affluent people through a range of housing solutions. We've built a couple of hundred units for rent and shared equity in Aviemore, Grantown, Kingussie, Carr-Bridge, Nethy Bridge and Kincraig and there are some rural ones too. These should be a community asset for decades to come. We're particularly proud of our award-winning developments such as the houses in Glenmore that won a sustainability award. Given the constraints and unfavourable funding regime we're working to, it's a record of some achievement."

Key Stats:

250 affordable houses built across the Park.

Planning permission approved for small scale renewable generation to generate equivalent energy demand for 1000 homes per year (plus removal of over 50km redundant overhead power lines).

Agreed policy ensures there will be no wind farm developments in the Park.



Discovering the great outdoors

Dougie Baird, CEO of Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust, talks about the changes to people's experiences over the past ten years.



"Becoming a National Park has made a massive difference because people can now enjoy the whole area – previously access development was at the landowner's discretion and some private estates were reluctant

to get involved. We can provide a common standard of access work across the entire 4,528 square kilometres. Our mountain pathwork helps people enjoy the mountains but it's really about protecting the natural heritage whilst making tourism sustainable so that visitors don't damage the environment, so our paths are preserving the fragile arctic alpine environment.

As well as two long distance routes, the Speyside Way and Deeside Way, another aspect of our work is building low level paths to get more people into the countryside and make it accessible to the widest range of people possible. For people who have stopped taking any regular exercise, these paths make it a safe environment, and our Walking to Health project encourages them to go for one weekly walk with volunteer leaders and fellow health walkers for support. The feedback is that it makes a huge difference with tangible health benefits. They get confidence, company, reconnected with people and landscapes. It's been interesting. I'm not aware of anyone else who's doing that across such a dispersed rural area."





Key Stats:

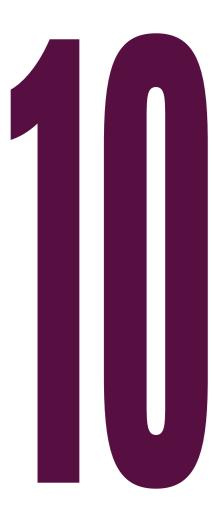
£4 million has gone into improving and building paths, bridges, signs, interpretations and leaflets in the Cairngorms National Park.

More than 32 Walking to Health groups meet around the Park.

14 people have achieved Level 2 SVQ in Environmental Conservation to date.

Glyn Jones, Head Ranger at the Balmoral Estate talks about the difference becoming a National Park has made to visitors.

"Being part of the National Park has made a really positive difference to the Balmoral Estate. It has definitely improved things for visitors. One of the most obvious ways is the visitor centre at the Spittal of Glen Muick – the Park Authority helped us with funding and specialist advice to help us produce good quality interpretation, which the visitors find informative and interesting. For instance they helped us connect up the estate into the context of the Park with the drove roads running through the Park. It's one of the busiest visitor centres in the Park. We have about sixty thousand visitors every year so that makes a difference, and the Park Authority also funds seasonal rangers so we have one in the visitor centre every day during the summer to welcome and advise people. Visitors vary from lots of family groups to experienced walkers. We run around 50 guided walks every year to help people get even more out of this beautiful estate. We have also been involved in joint events with other Rangers from across the Park."



Hope and a future for young people

David Green, former convener of the CNPA, talks about how the Park helps develop skills and improve training opportunities for young people.



"We're privileged to be looking after Britain's best and biggest National Park, working with partners to deliver benefits for the young people, because you want your youngsters to go and explore the world and then come back

to live and work in the Park and build a bond with the landscape. An example of this work is, the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust who we set up as an independent environmental charity. They put a successful bid in to the Mountain Heritage project and out of that came the SVQ apprenticeship scheme as part of creating a Rolls Royce, if you like, path network for the Park. It's for unemployed or under employed young people and it breaks through the 'no experience' block in the system: so far, 14 cohorts have achieved their SVQ and 12 have managed to achieve employment in this area.

Another example is something very interesting in Kincraig with the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust who have been working with the local community council to build sustainability houses. Part of this is a partnership project called the Cairngorms Skills and Construction Project: 19 young apprentices are working with the contractors, learning construction and woodland skills, while the Park is getting affordable housing built on affordable land from the Forestry Commission. The houses will all be affordable in perpetuity to meet local needs. It's a very good model."



Julian Digby founded Cairngorm Wilderness Contracts after graduating from the COAT SVQ in Environmental Conservation.

"COAT was how we all met up and decided to set up our own company. Alan, Stuart and I always had a vision that it would be a conservation company not construction company, having minimum impact and not using any machinery — it's all hand tools and brute force! We specialise in high altitude hand-built mountain pathways although we do smaller community jobs too. COAT was absolutely fundamental in helping us set up — they gave us encouragement and opportunities. We couldn't have done it without them, there's no two ways about that. We're a co-operative business so we're all equal directors and we've employed two other COAT trainees and give work experience opportunities to all the trainees as they come through. It's all surpassed our expectations about what would happen and it can only go from strength to strength."



Key Stat:

18-25 year olds leaving the Park is considerably lower than those found in other rural areas across Scotland.

Cairngorms National Park











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