

Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan

Consultation and Engagement Process - Stage 1

Community Engagement & Results – Tomintoul

Introduction

The core paths plan process targeted four main interest groups to engage with, these included; communities, land managers, people who recreate in the National Park (visitors and residents including businesses, national organisations and clubs e.g. Ramblers, Scottish Canoe Association, Cairngorm Club etc.) and visitors to the National Park (those who may not specifically come to the Park to recreate but may do so whilst they are here). The following report details how the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) engaged with the Tomintoul community, the people who participated in the engagement process and the feedback and results that they provided.

Engaging with the Tomintoul Community

The engagement period ran from 1st September to 30th November 2006. Questionnaires for the community were made available on the CNPA website, through contacting the CNPA directly and at a drop-in event. The community drop-in event was run to enable people in Tomintoul and the surrounding area to find out more about core paths planning and to advise the CNPA of the routes, paths and areas that are important to them and why.

The drop-in event was held at the Richmond Hotel in Tomintoul on Wednesday 15th November from 3pm to 7pm. CNPA staff Mandy Mathieson and Sandra Middleton ran the event.

Drop-in Event Promotion

The event was advertised in the Northern Scot and invitations were sent out to all local land owners/tenants and the community council. An email invitation was sent out to a wide range of local activity providers, businesses and individuals. Posters were displayed around the area a week in advance of the event and fresh posters were put up on the day of the meeting including a large board outside the event. In addition, contact was made with the school and the community through one of the Park Authority's Community Liaison Officers.

Drop-in Event Format

Participants were provided with a core paths planning leaflet which included details of the core paths plan process in the Cairngorms National Park and Frequently Asked Questions. The leaflet was made available to participants along with questionnaires and maps to record their views. A questionnaire containing a map was available for each settlement in the National Park as well as for the wider areas of the National Park. Large maps of the wider area were also available to help people identify routes outwith settlements. There was also an opportunity for people to record their views on the path network in the area in relation to what they thought was good or bad about it or what could be improved, this was recorded in an 'H-Diagram' format.

Drop-in Event Feedback

Approximately 18 people attended the event and people in the local pub also got involved. A total of 16 questionnaires were completed. Participants were asked to complete an evaluation sheet of the Tomintoul event, the results recorded are as follows:

	% of Participants Responding			
	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful	Waste of Time
Location	100%	0%	0%	0%
Venue	100%	0%	0%	0%
Timing	100%	0%	0%	0%
Questionnaires	57%	43%	0%	0%
Information Available	100%	0%	0%	0%
Opportunity to speak to staff	100%	0%	0%	0%

Participants in the Engagement Process

Throughout the 3 month period a total of 16 questionnaires were completed for the Tomintoul settlement. To help the CNPA gauge whether or not the process successfully engaged with a wide enough cross section of the community, the questionnaires asked people to provide information on their gender, age group and where they live. The results are shown below.

Participants by Gender

Male	44%	Female	56%
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Participants by Age Group

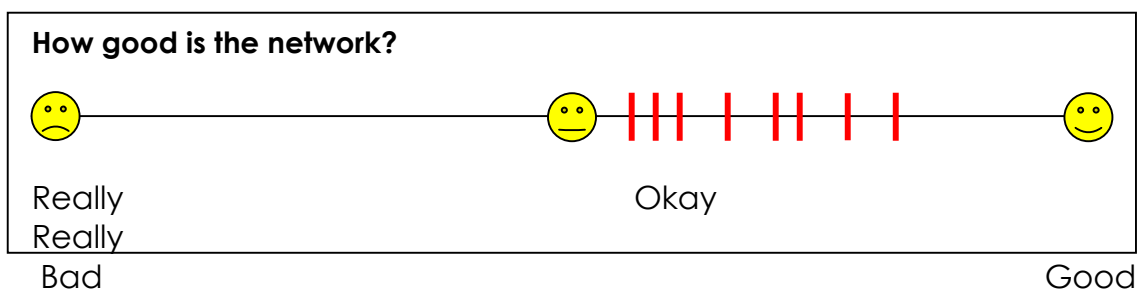
Under 16	6%	16 - 24	25%	25 - 44	25%	45 - 64	44%	65 - 74	0%	Over 75	0%
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Where people came from

% of people from each place who completed questionnaires					
Tomintoul	94%	Tomintoul & Glenlivet Area	6%	Elsewhere	0%

Results of the Engagement Process

At the drop-in event people were asked their views about the path network in and around Tomintoul. Participants were asked to place a mark on a line to show what they thought of the network



People were also asked what they think is good and bad about the network and what could be improved. The results are shown below, the comments are recorded exactly as written by participants.

Comments on the Tomintoul Network		
What is bad about the network?	What is good about the network?	How the network could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big puddles – community path & back lane • Continually having to avoid horse poop and dog poop • Back lanes in poor condition – not 'kept' • Pavements to medical centre & repair existing one • Access to Speyside Way from Campdalmore is an absolute disgrace – farmer has damaged area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each community has a circular path • Great network in place • Pavements good for prams • Good for bikes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make them wider for horses e.g. Malt land at top • Take gates down – easier access. Full of puddles too • Maintenance system / monitoring required • Signs to remind people to pick up dog mess! • More information more accessible to both residents & tourists Better promotion needed • More signposts way-marking • More doggie bins • A path out towards Bridge of Conglass would be helpful for pushchairs • Improvement to back lanes • Back Lanes could be improved...full of holes <u>Huge</u> puddles of water

In discussion with participants at the drop-in event, people were generally happy with the existing path network and issues were more to do with pavements and path surfaces and in particular the need to provide a small link from the pavement to the north of the settlement with the path network. A group of visiting walkers dropped-in at the event to report that having just walked the Speyside Way spur to Tomintoul they thought it was in a poor and dangerous condition.

Map Results

People were asked to identify the paths that are important to them on a map in the questionnaire, they were also asked to identify any new routes or areas that they would like to have easier access to and were encouraged to make comments. Participants at the event were given the opportunity to annotate large maps highlighting their popular routes in detail and also adding comments. Where someone made a

comment on the maps this has been listed in a table shown in Annex 1, the routes identified can be viewed on a map in Annex 2. Each comment has a number attributed to it to enable cross-referencing with the map in Annex 2 (only where the comment is specific to a geographic area). The routes shown in a solid line are those which people identified as being important to them. The dashed lines are proposed routes that people identified.

Questionnaire Results

A total of 16 questionnaires were received for the Tomintoul area. The responses to each of the questions are outlined below.

What outdoor activities do you currently do in and around Tomintoul?

Activity	% of respondents who undertake the activity
Low level walking	69%
Dog walking	50%
Hill walking	25%
Running	0%
Getting about in a wheelchair	0%
Walking with a pushchair	19%
Cycling on-road	38%
Cycling off-road	38%
Horse-riding	19%
Watersports	6%
Winter sports	44%
None	0%
Other	0%

Why do you do these activities?

Reason	% of respondents who identified the reason
To keep fit/healthy	63%
Enjoying the Countryside	63%

Travel to work/school	31%
Getting about	44%
Other*	19%

*Other reasons identified were 'hobbies', 'to play' and 'to spend time with animals'.

What activities would you like to see better opportunities for in and around the area?

Activity	% of respondents who identified the activity
Low level walking	25%
Dog walking	13%
Hill walking	13%
Running	0%
Getting about in a wheelchair	6%
Walking with a pushchair	13%
Cycling on-road	13%
Cycling off-road	38%
Horse-riding	6%
Watersports	19%
Winter sports	0%
None	6%
Other	0%

Would better opportunities for these activities encourage you to;

Reason	% of respondents who identified each activity
Walk to work/school	6%
Cycle to work/school	0%
Try new activities	44%
Get fit	50%

Get outdoors more	56%
Other	0%

Summary

During the public engagement process it was found that there is a need to improve and repair the surface of the Speyside Way spur into Tomintoul. The pavements near and to the health centre need improving and the pavement to the north of the settlement needs to be extended to link up with the path network.

The most popular path identified was the Tomintoul circular route (identified by over 60% of respondents). The back lanes, the road down to the Delnabo Bridge, the road up to the Bridge of Conglass and the Old Military Road to Glen Mulliach Forest were also very popular (identified by over 50% of respondents).

Low-level walking, dog-walking and wintersports were all popular in the area with most people doing activities to keep fit and healthy and equally to enjoy the countryside. There was a reasonably high demand for better opportunities for off-road cycling and for low level walking.

Reflections

The drop-in was relatively well attended and the response rate on questionnaires was doubled by taking some over to the pub. There was positive feedback from those who did attend the event. Unlike many other settlements, there was a good response from 16 to 24 year olds and from the under 65 age group in general. Unlike other communities, there was not a great deal of response for the Tomintoul area at other events in the National Park and the majority of people who completed questionnaires live in the Tomintoul area.

Next Steps

The issues raised and the information gathered throughout the process will be used to inform the development of selection criteria for core paths. The selection criteria will then be used to select core paths for the Cairngorms National Park. The selection criteria and maps of the selected paths will be drawn up into an Interim Draft Core Paths Plan which will be completed by the end of March 2007. This Plan will then be made available for the public to make comment.

Cairngorms National Park Authority

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Annex 1 - Comments received on maps at the events and in the questionnaires

Where the comment relates to a geographic area on the map the number of the comment has been written on to the map in Annex 2.

No.	Comment <i>(as written by respondent)</i>
1	Would be nice to have path to bypass Lecht Road when coming out of the old military road towards Glenmuliach. That road is quite fast and dangerous to walk along especially during heavy rain.
2	So I can walk to work without having to walk along a busy road
3	No path for Speyside Way
4	Make a lovely walk and joins up with an existing one
5	Haven't been along the military road for a while but it was in a sorry muddy state the last time I ventured
6	Extend pavement to meet community walk and need of Tomintoul
7	Quite a bit of erosion on the way to the bridge
8	<i>Cannot easily access Glen Avon Estate (not numbered on map in Annex 2)</i>
9	<i>Inchrory Estate Privately owned – no access for horses (not numbered on map in Annex 2)</i>

