

Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan

Consultation and Engagement Process - Stage 1

Community Engagement & Results – Nethy Bridge

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 Nethy Bridge community, the people who participated in the engagement process and the feedback and results that they provided.

Engaging with the Nethy Bridge 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 two drop-in events. The community drop-in events were run to enable people in Nethy Bridge 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 first drop-in event was held at the Community Centre on Saturday, 21st October from 2:00pm to 4:30pm and the second in the Explore Abernethy room within the Community Centre from 5.00pm to 7.00pm on Tuesday 24th October. CNPA staff Sandra Middleton and Bob Grant ran the events.

Drop-in Event Promotion

The events were advertised in the Strathspey and Badenoch Herald and also the subject of a press release. Invitations were sent out to all local land owners/tenants and the community council. Posters were displayed around the village a week in advance of the events and fresh posters were put up on the day of the meeting including a large board outside the event.

Drop-in Event Format

Participants were provided with a core paths planning leaflet. This included details of the core paths plan process in the Cairngorms National Park as well as answers to some frequently asked questions. Participants were also provided with questionnaires and maps to record their views. A questionnaire containing a map was available for each settlement in the Park as well as for the wider areas of the 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 28 people attended the events and a total of 8 questionnaires were completed at the events and a number of people took questionnaires away to complete in their own time. Participants were asked to complete an evaluation sheet of the Nethy Bridge events, the results recorded are as follows:

	% of Participants Responding			
	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful	Waste of Time
Location	55%	45%	0%	0%
Venue	60%	40%	0%	0%
Timing	62%	38%	0%	0%
Questionnaires	60%	40%	0%	0%
Information Available	66%	34%	0%	0%
Opportunity to speak to staff	70%	30%	0%	0%

the comments are recorded exactly as written by participants. Reference numbers have been include alongside specific comments to enable them to be cross-referenced to the map at the end of this report.

Comments on the Nethy Bridge 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"> • Appropriate low use horse access could be re-established from Garlyne track end to Backharn to ensure riding facility. Currently blocked by cattle grid with no side access.(1) • The colours defining the various walks around Nethy could do with being clearer. They are too close in colour on the illustrated leaflet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive trails network established by Explore Abernethy exists now. These need to be maintained alongside housing developments which are very important for the village. • Walks leaflet readily available from Post Office or Explore Abernethy room. A variety of walks available locally – “Explore Abernethy” and “Speyside Way” for example. • Agree with above comments – great path network and well maintained. • Also agree with above. • Agree with above for leaflets. • Path signage is welcoming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete path from P.O. along the playing field towards Duack Bridge (it is part of the Speyside Way.) The ultimate path will go through the wood to meet Tulloch Road between Greenward and (unknown word) B&B (2) • Do up track from Dell Road down along the pylon line to Haemack’s road (3) • A9 cycle path made up to standard • Additional footbridge over the River Nethy opposite the Community Hall. (5) • Duack bridge requires footbridge alongside. (6)

A significant number of respondents wished to see the Speyside Way taken off the road and a pedestrian bridge installed over the Duack burn. People were very positive about the path network in and around Nethy Bridge and were particularly proud of the work that had been done by Explore Abernethy in this regard.

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 H diagram above or on 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 19 questionnaires were received for the Nethy Bridge area. The responses to each of the questions are outlined below.

What outdoor activities do you currently do in and around Nethy Bridge?

Activity	% of respondents who undertake the activity
Low level walking	95%
Dog walking	26%
Hill walking	79%
Running	32%
Getting about in a wheelchair	0%
Walking with a pushchair	5%
Cycling on-road	74%
Cycling off-road	74%
Horse-riding	0%
Watersports	16%
Winter sports	32%
None	0%
Other*	5%

*Other activities identified were: 'farming'.

Why do you do these activities?

Reason	% of respondents who identified the reason
To keep fit/healthy	89%
Enjoying the Countryside	95%
Travel to work/school	32%
Getting about	53%
Other*	11%

*Other reasons identified were: 'work as a ranger' and 'exercising fit dog'.

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	16%
Dog walking	0%
Hill walking	0%
Running	0%
Getting about in a wheelchair	11%
Walking with a pushchair	0%
Cycling on-road	5%
Cycling off-road	21%
Horse-riding	11%
Watersports	0%
Winter sports	5%
None	16%
Other*	5%

*Other activities identified were: 'Opportunities already good'

Would better opportunities for these activities encourage you to;

Reason	% of respondents who identified each activity
Walk to work/school	5%
Cycle to work/school	5%
Try new activities	26%
Get fit	5%
Get outdoors more	21%
Other	0%

Summary

During the public engagement process it was found that people were very positive about the path network in and around Nethy Bridge and were particularly proud of the work that had been done by Explore Abernethy in this regard.

The most popular paths identified were The Speyside Way and the Mill Trail (both 68% of respondents) followed by the River Walk (52% of respondents). Another popular choice was the Wilderness Trail (31% of respondents).

Most activities were reasonably popular in the area, low-level walking was by far the most popular activity followed by hillwalking and cycling on and off-road. Most people doing activities did so to keep fit and healthy and equally to enjoy the countryside and a reasonable number did so to get to work or school. There was not much demand for better opportunities.

Reflections

The drop-in sessions were relatively well attended but it may be that the quality of the existing network meant that this was not a burning issue for many of the residents. A number of people have returned questionnaires since. There were no responses from people in the under 16 age group and only 5 in the 16 to 24 age group. 32% of respondents were in the 25 to 44 age group and 53% in the 45 to 64 age group.

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
1 March 2007

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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 (as written by respondent)
1	See 'h' diagram
2	See 'h' diagram
3	the track under the pylon lines from Dell Road running eastward through the forest has been deliberately left to reinstate due to wet nature of path (See 'h' diagram)
4	missing bridge crossing the Allt Mor at Mill of Garlyne
5	See 'h' diagram
6	See 'h' diagram
7	the track past Croftnaquien has been proposed for closure / re-routing but this should be maintained open
8	If a short section of steps could be removed from the return loop of the River Walk it would be accessible to wheelchairs
9	the link path from the school to the road should be protected to complete the circular path
10	path network has fantastic informal character and should be safeguarded
11	school route really important
12	path blocked by garden
13	Cycle route to work (dangerous road), need cycle way between GoS & Nethy
14	Cycle to school (also hazardous)
15	Upgrade to full cycle use (Speyside Way)
16	Spey canoe kayak
17	Speyside Way important for bringing people into village, but could be better marked through village centre
18	Lots of well-used trails in school woods – possible threat from development
19	Would like disabled access all around this walk (Currently short section of steps)
20	Important link over bridge

21	I consider we are lucky to have so many good paths already around Nethy Bridge which are well maintained (<i>not numbered on map in Annex 2</i>)
22	Note: signposting is generally v. good in this area (<i>not numbered on map in Annex 2</i>)
23	I think there are more tracks & paths in this areas than are marked on the OS map. Difficult to tell without going to 'have a look on the ground'. I cycle in this area & the area immediately south of your map on a regular basis during the summer, so its quite important to me.
24	Foot/cycle/horse bridge needed here
25	Path off road for Speyside Way
26	a footpath over the River Nethy its dangerous at present
27	Have looked at the Aviemore and Carr-Bridge plans. Kinveachy junction not on download. I cycle from Nethy to Aviemore for work. It would be good if cycle path from Boat of Garten to Carr-Bridge turn off was extended to Aviemore, there are quite a few cyclists using this route regularly e.g. for work. Speyside Way is okay but not all the time. (<i>not numbered on map in Annex 2</i>)
28	Path blocked by garden
29	Its great to have lots of routes for the tourists e.g. Speyside Way etc. but cycle tracks like Kingussie to Newtonmore are good for locals as well. (<i>not numbered on map in Annex 2</i>)
30	Footbridge across Duack Burn (possible diversion of Speyside Way from B970).
31	Diversion of Speyside Way off the road as it crosses the Duack Burn.

