

Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan

Consultation and Engagement Process - Stage 1

Community Engagement & Results – Kingussie

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 Kingussie community; the people who participated in the engagement process and the feedback and results that they provided.

Engaging with the Kingussie 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 of Kingussie 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 Badenoch Centre in Kingussie on Saturday 14 October from 2:30pm to 4:00pm. CNPA staff Fran Potheary and Heather Galbraith ran the event.

Drop-in Event Promotion

The event was advertised in the Badenoch and Strathspey Herald and was also the subject of a press release. 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 village prior to the event and a large board outside the event venue on the day.

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 provided answers to Frequently Asked Questions. This 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 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 6 people attended the event. A total of 4 questionnaires were completed at the event and a number of people took questionnaires away to complete in their own time. Participants were asked to complete an evaluation sheet of the Kingussie 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	100%	0%	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 13 questionnaires were completed for the Kingussie 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	73%	Female	27%
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Participants by Age Group

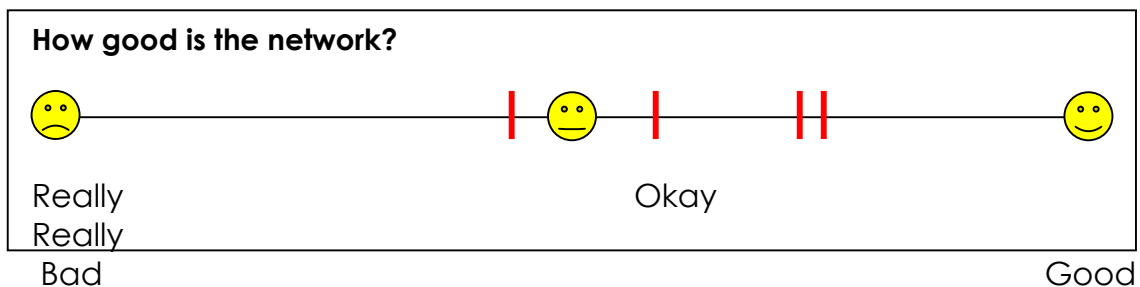
Under 16	0%	16 - 24	0%	25 - 44	9%	45 - 64	55%	65 - 74	36%	Over 75	0%
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Where people came from

% of people from each place who completed questionnaires					
Kingussie	91%	Kingussie Community Council Area	0%	Elsewhere	9%

Results of the Engagement Process

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



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 Kingussie Network		
What is bad about	What is good	How the network could be

the network?	about the network?	improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of maintenance – footpaths and bridges over Gynack especially • Signposting needs maintenance (vandalism?) • Great idea (<i>above</i>) but needs thought and upkeep • Bridge over Gynack needs repairing. Who owns it? Who pays? • Paths should be better planned regarding topography and land use e.g. forest extraction routes should be avoided as these will be required in future years for timber removal • Most of the lower paths are in forest plantations sheltered on windy days but rather sunless and gloomy especially in winter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautiful scenery • Immediately accessible • Varied terrain but not over-taxing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More regular maintenance • Immediate action is required regarding the bridges over the Gynack i.e. the bridge at the Cross Restaurant and Strathlynn. These bridges are central to joining the two sides of the town and their current condition threatens the viability of the proposed "Sprint-0" which is planned to be included in "Spey 2007" the Scottish 6 day Orienteering event at the beginning of August 2007. Although based in Grantown and using 6 areas in B&S for the main events, this additional fun event would bring many participants /spectators to Kingussie with consequent economic benefit which should not be underestimated. Unless the question of responsibility for these bridges is speedily resolved and action taken to repair them, this benefit will be lost to the town as the event cannot go ahead unless the organisers can be sure of these paths being available to give an orienteering course around the town of the required international standard • The above comments are relevant and the bridge problem should not be

		allowed to stagnate and drag on. Questions of ownership should not be allowed to fudge the issue. The “council” has shut off access and should take action for repair
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In general discussion with participants at the drop-in event, people were positive about the path network around Kingussie. There is a serious concern about the fate of the two bridges over the Gynack closed by the Highland Council and frustration at the lack of progress towards establishing ownership and therefore resolution.

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 13 questionnaires were received for the Kingussie area. The responses to each of the questions are outlined below.

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

Activity	% of respondents who undertake the activity
Low level walking	92%
Dog walking	46%
Hill walking	92%
Running	15%
Gettina about in a	0%

wheelchair	
Walking with a pushchair	0%
Cycling on-road	62%
Cycling off-road*	54%
Horse-riding	0%
Watersports	38%
Winter sports	23%
None	0%
Other**	23%

*Comment: 'Sustrans Route'

**Other reasons identified were: 'Photography, Birdwatching', 'Orienteering' and 'Rock climbing - Kingussie Crag'.

Why do you do these activities?

Reason	% of respondents who identified the reason
To keep fit/healthy	92%
Enjoying the Countryside	92%
Travel to work/school	8%
Getting about	38%
Other*	15%

*Other reasons identified were: 'Birdwatching' and 'because its there'

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	77%
Dog walking	23%
Hill walking	31%

Running	8%
Getting about in a wheelchair	8%
Walking with a pushchair	8%
Cycling on-road	15%
Cycling off-road	38%
Horse-riding	0%
Watersports	0%
Winter sports	8%
None	0%
Other*	15%

* Other activities identified were: 'Kids to school, roads very busy as are pavements!' and 'not really 'other' but improvement to present footpath and use and coverage'.

Would better opportunities for these activities encourage you to;

Reason	% of respondents who identified each activity
Walk to work/school	15%
Cycle to work/school	23%
Try new activities	8%
Get fit	38%
Get outdoors more	54%
Other*	15%

*Other reasons identified were: 'Off-road cycle routes (not MTB)', and 'Community Support'

Summary

During the public engagement process it was found that the Gynack Bridges are a very important part of the path network for the local community and a resolution needs to be found to the existing problems.

The most popular paths identified were mostly to the north and west of the village, Loch Gynack and Craig Beag routes (84% of respondents), paths in and around Tom Baraidh Woods (76 % of respondents), 46% of respondents also identified a route along the Spey to Newtonmore.

Most activities were reasonably popular in the area, although low-level walking and hillwalking are by far the most popular activity. Most people doing activities did so to keep fit and healthy and equally to enjoy the countryside. There was a reasonably high demand for better opportunities for low level walking and for off-road cycling.

Reflections

The event was run on the back of a workshop being run by Upland Contracts regarding the developments of local path networks - this was attended by 6 people who contributed to the CPP event as well. Generally though the drop-in was very poorly attended – only 4 people - which may have been as a result that it was a very fine Saturday on the first day of the school half term break, and the event was advertised relatively late. A number of people returned questionnaires subsequent to the event.

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.

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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	Etteridge access to Newtonmore and improved link across A9
2	West Terrace Circular - Path with open views through mixed birch and pine. Much better than dense plantation above
3	West Terrace Circular - Used by some tourists on visits to the Duke of Gordon Hotel
4	Repair bridges over Gynack
5	Better access through Pitmain Lodge
6	Routes to Creag Dubh, Creag Beag and Carn Fhreicadeain (all off the map)
7	Better link to Newtonmore (via Loch Gynack and the hillside)
8	Better line for Glen Tromie/Ruthven circuit
9	Tom Baraidh Woods and Golf Course Circular (<i>promoted routes</i>)
Q2	Approx location of timber footbridge across Gynack burn - at present access is closed as bridge has been judged unsafe. This bridge is part of the Hazel Woods local path and is much used by locals and tourists from the Duke of Gordon Hotel coach/bus trips
Q11	<i>Route along south shore of Loch Gynack – requires attention</i>
Q12	<i>Route from old township at Toman an t-Seomair to Newtonmore – an old well visible circa 17th century route from Pitmain ‘stop-over’ to Newtonmore. Very wet but excellent otherwise. Desirable summer only path to Newtonmore along River Spey. Route round and to north of Loch Gynack? (off map therefore not clear what is being referred to) – useful bike route but access restricted because it passes through Pitmain Lodge “policies”. Desirable route to Raitts old settlements and archaeology site. Gynack Bridges – this important path link has been closed by the Highland Council. Right of Way to Tromie</i>
Q13	<i>Route from Tom Cheireag to Gordon Hall Farm – long term objective for Speyside Way. Path from Ballochroan Farm up to Allt Gortan – rough track exists. Link Wildcat Trail to Kingussie paths. Route from Pitmain Farm round Creag Beag – ill-defined. Route from Gordon Hall Farm to Glen Tromie House and back up the Tromie Road – a good circular walk.</i>

