

Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan

Consultation and Engagement Process - Stage 1

Community Engagement & Results – Granttown-on-Spey

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 Granttown-on-Spey community, the people who participated in the engagement process and the feedback and results that they provided.

Engaging with the Granttown-on-Spey 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 Granttown-on-Spey 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 events combined with the Cromdale consultation were held at the Inverallan Church Hall on Tuesday the 14th of November between 5pm

and 7pm and on Saturday the 18th of November between 2:30pm and 4pm. CNPA staff Murray Ferguson, Fran Potheary and Adam Streeter Smith attended the events with assistance from Stewart Eastaugh Outdoor Access Officer with the Highland Council.

Drop-in Event Promotion

The event was advertised in the Badenoch & 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 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.

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 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 13 people attended both events and a total of 22 questionnaires were completed for the Grantown on Spey settlement. Participants were asked to complete an evaluation sheet of the joint Grantown on Spey and Cromdale event, the results recorded are as follows;

	% of Participants Responding			
	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful	Waste of Time
Location	63%	37%	0%	0%
Venue	66%	34%	0%	0%
Timing	57%	43%	0%	0%
Questionnaires	70%	30%	0%	0%
Information Available	100%	0%	0%	0%

*Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan
Community Engagement Results March 2007*

Opportunity to speak to staff	85%	15%	0%	0%
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General comments were received about why there was not a separate event in Cromdale.

the network?	about the network?	be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No circular route signed • No Central orientation panel in town • No orientation panel at all smaller clusters of paths- e.g. Beachen Wood and here folk generally pick up the routes. • Not enough use of the River Spey • Descriptions of land use and history on site • Locked gates and some pedestrian gates unhelpful for cyclists • Too much abuse re. dog fouling, litter (paper hankies etc) and damage from inappropriate use. • View point path requires funding for higher standard of maintenance. • A lot of dog fouling at entry points to woods and by car parks • Not enough cycle routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied, intensity, differing difficulty levels • Good networks • Lots of varied walks, with loads of wildlife to see • Generally very good access and good quality paths • Quite a good network of paths around Grantown with coloured markers • A lot of good woodland paths and tracks • Plenty of good footpaths easily accessible from town centre • Anagach Woods superb network of paths of a variety of standards, good waymarking and leaflets. View point path also good and leaflet available • There are good views • Paths (foot and bike) very good in local woods but few more signposts handy for non-locals • Anagach paths fantastic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation panels and signage uniting all routes (leaflets are expensive and unsustainable) • Central orientation panels in town • Circular routes signed • Use the river! • More off road cycle routes • Better access to Dulnain Bridge • Better access to Cromdale • More signage in town • More pushchair friendly gates on some routes • More way marked paths to north of town into Glenbeg and hills to north and west. • More all ability routes • Funding and maintain muddy sections e.g. drainage and hardcore • A few more way marked paths might be good • Suitable places for horses to canter • We need a pedestrian and cycle access to Dulnain Bridge (agreed by two others) • A traffic free route for horses for the short section of main road from Craiglynne Hotel to roundabout on bypass • Not enough marked paths to the north • Designate minor paths in Anagach etc as

		fragile for pedestrians only – to avoid damage by mountain bikes and horses in wet periods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More all abilities walks • Designated cycle tracks
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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 22 questionnaires were received for the Grantown-on-Spey area. The responses to each of the questions are outlined below.

What outdoor activities do you currently do in and around Grantown-on-Spey?

Activity	% of respondents who undertake the activity
Low level walking	95%
Dog walking	50%
Hillwalking	77%
Running	41%
Getting about in a wheelchair	5%
Walking with a pushchair	23%
Cycling on-road	73%

Cycling off-road	64%
Horse-riding	0%
Watersports	27%
Wintersports	23%
None	0%
Other*	14%

*Other activities identified were: 'Golf', 'Wildlife Watching / Berry & Mushroom Picking', and 'Rock Climbing'.

Why do you do these activities?

Reason	% of respondents who identified the reason
To keep fit/healthy	95%
Enjoying the Countryside	100%
Travel to work/school	36%
Getting about	14%
Other*	23%

*Other reasons identified were: 'To visit people', 'To visit Family & Friends and socialise with them', 'Cross Country Skiing', 'To keep the dogs amused!', and 'Teaching Outdoor activities'.

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	32%
Dog walking	9%
Hillwalking	5%
Running	0%
Getting about in a wheelchair	9%
Walking with a pushchair*	18%
Cycling on-road**	14%
Cycling off-road	36%

Horse-riding	5%
Watersports	0%
Wintersports	5%
None	9%
Other***	23%

The following comments were made:

* 'could be a lot better'

** 'Cycle lanes' and 'Better signage'.

*** Other activities identified were: 'Less dog poo - It's a disgrace around the duck pond Kyalintra Park / Grant Park / Anagach Car Parks. It's a hazard for children!', 'Not sure - live in Aviemore', 'Travel off road (tarmac) between communities, navigation exercises' and 'Cross Country Skiing'.

Would better opportunities for these activities encourage you to;

Reason	% of respondents who identified each activity
Walk to work/school	0%
Cycle to work/school	9%
Try new activities	9%
Get fit	27%
Get outdoors more	50%
Other*	14%

*Other reasons identified were: 'Travel by Bike', 'Learn more about my area' and 'In Winter'.

Summary

During the public engagement process it was found that the existing network is very highly thought of with most respondents happy with the type and location of paths although issues were raised in respect of barriers such as gates and signage. There was demand for circular routes which are suitable for cycling and for the development of all-abilities routes, which would also cater for pushchairs. Information and signage need to be coordinated to make it easier for visitors to find and use the network. It was also felt that the Spey is under utilised.

By far the most popular route in the area is the old railway line including the Dava Way (identified by 81% of respondents). Other very popular paths were the Anagach Wood path network (Green route identified

by 72% of respondents). There was also a high demand (40% of respondents) for paths along the river and around Beachen Wood to Wester Dreggie .

Most activities proved popular in the area although low-level walking was by far the most popular, followed by hill walking and cycling off and on road. Most people doing activities did so to primarily enjoy the countryside but also to keep fit and healthy. It is interesting to note the high level of travel to work and school also. There was a high demand for better off-road cycling routes followed by low level walking and some demand for better opportunities for wheelchair users and pushchairs.

Reflections

The drop-in was generally well attended with positive feedback and a number of people have returned questionnaires since. The engagement process has failed to capture any data from the 16-24 and over 75 age groups in the Grantown-on-Spey 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

1 March 2006

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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.	Walk to school
2.	Good XC ski route in the winter
3.	Traffic free off road horse/cycle route to Dulnain Bridge

4.	I use all the paths in Anagach Woods and Poor house woods on a regular basis- probably 5 or 5 times/ week. There are no places I would like to go but can't easily access and I appreciate the need to balance access with wild life. It may be worth mentioning that the "green route" in Anagach is the shortest but probably the most difficult to get around with a wheelchair or a buggy due to tree roots and stones. I don't think this is well communicated
5.	No access for pushchairs (kissing gate) bikes have to be lifted over
6.	Gate cattle grid locked no access for pushchairs bikes here have to be lifted over
7.	Speyside Way – poor for use by pushchairs and bikes as so many gates between Grantown and Nethy Bridge
8.	No access for push chair steps/narrow bridge
9.	Path/old road very over grown
10.	Difficult access for pushchairs and bikes
11.	Access blocked by locked gate on railway line here squeeze through or climb over
12.	No access for pushchairs or bikes (kissing gate)
13.	No pavement- better route past hospital to gate house
14.	Park gates don't lock
15.	Weather depends on routes taken. Better access needed in Heathfied and Knockenruich
16.	Locked access unsuitable steps for buggy
17.	Unfriendly access for prams has limited my use of the Speyside Way
18.	Maintenance required
19.	Park gates don't lock
20.	Awful access for prams and buggies
21.	Needs better info
22.	Be good to open up this area with signed routes that could link into the Dava Way, the viewpoint walk and Anagach Woods
23.	Cromdale to GOS on old railway would give a circular riverside walk
24.	No route to Dulnain bridge
25.	Speyside Way Grantown to Nethy difficult to access with pushchair or bike lots of gates

26.	New steps and gate at the bottom preventing bike access at Cherry grove down to the river
27.	Fisher mans road at Cromdale bridge blocked to bikes
28.	Dodgy pavement on bit of Mossie Road between Church Ave and Seafield Ave
29.	No access for bikes or pushchairs (kissing gates)
30.	Series of locked gates to Lochindorb Glen Beg Estate are the culprits
31.	GOS could do with a circular route linking the river with Glen Beg through to Dressie and viewpoint walk
32.	Feasibility of a step free route between cemetery and Kynlra House. Steps barrier to young mums pavement runs out
33.	Off road route avoiding A95
34.	No access with pushchairs steps and narrow bridge
35.	No access for pushchairs
36.	Cant do this route with a buggy
37.	Better paths to Lochindorb
38.	No pavement busy road
General Comments	
	Routes around Grantown mostly through woods. Walks should be circular and go through all habitats not just different kinds of nature and exotic woodlands; wood pasture and arable are just as interesting and important
	The paths marked already exist but need improvements including where possible removal of stiles or replacement by gates which can be activated by and used by elderly people those with children (perhaps pushchairs) and with dogs. It would be more attractive to residents and visitors if the riverside paths could be made more passable
	A circular route around Grantown would be excellent for all abilities
	Horse access to Dava Way and Speyside Way. Horse (traffic free) to Dulnain to join up with path to lagan hill. Horse (traffic free) route from Grantown old bridge towards Nethy to get to Revack and Castle Roy woods and onwards to Nethy.

In addition, the following comments were received from a member of the public who was unable to attend an event: Would like to see the development of Off Road cycling around Grantown, and would like to see a web based map of all the paths around Grantown. There is an

obvious circular route around Grantown which visitors are unlikely to find without assistance.

