

## Communicating Cairngorms

### Case Study – Deeside Donside Development Project (DDDP)

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With help from statutory agencies such as the CNPA and local authorities, communities across the Park are being encouraged and helped with their own community action planning – in other words – communities taking the lead role in deciding what their needs, challenges and aspirations are and getting the necessary support to make their projects a success.

An action plan was produced for Ballater in 2009 through a consultation coordinated by the Ballater Our Voice Our Future, which was set up by the Ballater and Crathie Community Council. This was supported by a range of local community groups and agencies, including the Marr Area Partnership. From here, it was recognised that a project worker was required to help all the communities in the Marr area within the Cairngorms National Park to take their community development planning forward as well as the projects which were identified during the process.

The Deeside Donside Development Project was established as a result and employs a full-time development manager, Nick Mardell. His role is to support and enable community and project groups to achieve their sustainable projects.

Much of Nick's work involves being the 'middle man', helping groups who may not know where to go for advice and funding, or help with negotiations over certain matters. As a development manager, Nick is independent of any particular agency and can provide clear, unbiased support and guidance as well as give some practical input into a community or group's project.

DDDP has made a real difference to many projects in the area including the Ballater Learning Centre, where Nick has helped with a learning demands survey in the area to begin the process of getting the Centre business plan prepared and to help identify sources of funding for the project.

DDDP has also helped the Ballater Business Association, facilitating a working relationship with the Cairngorms Business Partnership to develop a new brochure and map for the community. Aberdeenshire Council has also worked closely with DDDP to help identify traffic calming measures for sections of the Seven Bridges walk with DDDP being the key link between the CNPA planning and outdoor access teams and the local authority.

To date, the DDDP has helped get approximately £250,000 worth of initiatives off the starting blocks in the Deeside and Donside area ranging from local heritage projects to renewable energy schemes and providing local business support. DDDP is also an important link between the communities and statutory agencies where local housing solutions are concerned.

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