

Visitor Information in the Cairngorms National Park

When the Cairngorms National Park came into being in 2003, there was already a network of visitor information centres and a variety of printed and online visitor information in existence. Rather than create new dedicated information centres, the general consensus from all parties was that it would be far better for all those involved in providing visitor information to work together to create National Park resources that would then be available in existing visitor information centres and visitor attractions throughout the Cairngorms National Park.

The CNPA went on to develop a range of support tools to help others create their National Park visitor information from 'Sharing the Stories' – a guide to interpretation – to the development of the Cairngorms brand, stunning panorama maps, and so on. Now, the CNPA and partners including Visit Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, local authorities, various estates, trusts and charities have worked tirelessly over the past few years to refurbish and upgrade existing visitor information centres with Cairngorms National Park information, imagery and interpretation.

In some cases, brand new facilities have been built including a new wildlife hide with interpretation at Loch Insh National Nature Reserve, a brand new ranger base at Glen Doll for the Angus Glens Ranger Service and major works at Blair Atholl for the refurbishment of the ranger base there and a new visitor information centre.

Visitor information leaflets have been given a similar treatment, rather than create something completely new; those providing the information have been given the support and encouragement to amend existing printed visitor information to focus more on the National Park and to follow certain design guidelines, making National Park information easy for the visitor to recognise. In addition, the Cairngorms Business Partnership, with support from Visit Scotland, has produced a marketing framework for the Park to further support a strong brand identity for the area.

Now – almost a decade later – the visitor can't fail to notice they are in the Cairngorms National Park from the granite markers and other signage marking the entrances to the family of leaflets, all featuring the distinctive Cairngorms brand and all available in the refurbished visitor information centres and other locations.

For more information email: petecrane@cairngorms.co.uk