

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: CEO REPORT & CONVENER UPDATE

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Purpose:

- I. To highlight to Board Members the main strategic areas of work that are being directed by Management Team. These are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver with partners the aspirations of the National Park Partnership Plan.

Conservation:

- a) **Cairngorms National Park Forest Strategy:** The Forest Strategy launch in Boat of Garten community hall on 1st March was a great success with around 150 people attending. The speakers all did a great job explaining how important the strategy is not only for the National Park but for Scotland, which led to some useful ideas and very positive discussions. The challenge now is to encourage more landowners to pick up on the strategy's vision and objectives and to follow the guidance it provides. With this in mind we are in discussion with other agencies and NGOs about creating a 'challenge fund' to help encourage more woodland creation in the National Park.
- b) **Cairngorms Capercaillie Framework:** The National Lottery Heritage Fund and LEADER supported capercaillie project to answer the question "How can people who live, work and play in the Cairngorms National Park help secure the long-term future of capercaillie?" Work in the pilot community of Carr-bridge is currently high profile. Direct canvassing and a much increased ranger presence are showing a high degree of support amongst wider resident population although there still remain a few very vocal critics. Work to tee-up forest enhancement and expansion, gain better understandings of capercaillie ecology and carry out preliminary audience assessments in communities of place and interest for the delivery phase, are progressing on schedule and budget.
- c) **East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership:** The partnership has recently been focused on collecting data on e.g. muirburn, mountain hares, waders, and planned woodland creation. Collectively significant progress is being made on all of these topics. On 27th March, CNPA Land Management Team will meet with gamekeepers from the six estates along with representatives from the Heather Trust and Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust to observe and discuss muirburn on site. This will be an important opportunity to engage with the keepers directly about management on the ground and to discuss different perspectives.

- d) **Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership:** 2019 is set to be the busiest year of all for TGLP with a number of very challenging major projects set to be carried out. Work will start soon on stabilising Blairfindy Castle. The Scalan mills project is due to go for planning permission in April. The Speyside Way Spur work is also due to start this spring. Already we are seeing local economic benefits from the Dark Sky Park designation. The river restoration projects (slowing the flow and water margin management, both relying on the support and complex funding requirements of a number of partners) continue to be challenging but we are confident, based on successes to date that we will see more exciting projects in place in the next few months. Overall there are 20 projects being undertaken by the Partnership.

- e) **Cairngorms Nature:** The launch of the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2019 – 2024 was celebrated at a Holyrood reception on 21st February, hosted by Graeme Dey and attended by 30 senior staff from NPPP partners. This followed three days of promotion at a stand in the garden lobby when over 30 MSPs came and chatted to CNPA staff about conservation and sustainable land management in the Park. The Holyrood reception was followed up with a local launch, shared with the launch of the Forest Strategy, on 1st March. It was well attended by project staff from partner agencies and organisations with direct responsibility for delivery. A bid for funding Cairngorms Nature activity has been submitted to the SNH Biodiversity Challenge Fund.

- f) **Peatland Action:** The Cairngorms Peatland Action Project Officers continue to deliver restoration management across the National Park with 13 projects targeting over 1100 hectares of peatland with a budget of £1.48 million in 2018/19. Eight of these projects will complete by the end of March, with weather and contractor capacity delaying the other five. Development work by the two project officers has identified over 1200 hectares across 11 peatland sites for potential restoration management this year. With Peatland Action having a very limited budget in 2019, it is unlikely that all of these projects will start this year.

Visitor Experience:

- a) **Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum:** We will recruit four new members spring 2019 making a total of 12 including one CNPA board member with the first of the bi-annual meeting in May 2019. We are also looking at the potential to organise a one day conference to coincide with Wee Walks Week looking at recreation and access in the National Park.

- b) **Long Distance Routes:**
 - i. **Speyside Way:** Planning consent & funding is in now in place from Low Carbon Travel and Transport (LCTT) Challenge Fund to complete the 'new build' to Newtonmore by Autumn 2019. In addition to path construction in 2019 work on signage, interpretation and creating a start/finish point at Newtonmore will be undertaken. Kingussie has secured Sustrans funding to improve access in the village that will also look at potential improvements to the roadside section from Ruthven to the village. Funding has also been

secured from SNH to improve the surface and drainage along the route between Boat of Garten and Aviemore.

- ii. **Deeside Way:** Planning consent for the path line from Braemar to Invercauld Bridge has been granted. However, our principle community link funding support Sustrans are now only funding multi-use tarmac paths so other sources of funding will need to be secured to build this section.
- c) **Mountains and People Project:** The five year Mountains and People project within both National Parks in Scotland is approaching its fourth year. The work includes significant upgrades to 52km of key mountain paths, and the involvement and commitment of people through training, volunteering and learning. CNPA are working to maintain a sustainable legacy at the end of the project in both path maintenance and public involvement through volunteering.
- d) **Active Aviemore:** The partnership comprising CNPA, Highland Council, Hitrans and Sustrans has now completed outline plans for delivering segregated multi-use paths through the village that have been approved by both CNPA and Highland Council. The first phase of detailed, costed, designs for the multiuse path will be produced for the area in and around the new hospital. These will be undertaken in first half of 2019 and will include local consultation. In addition **Kingussie** and **Dalnain** communities have secured Sustrans funding to develop proposals for improving multi-use access in and around the communities. The Kingussie work is linking to Speyside Way and NCN7 and Dalnain looking for a multiuse path link to Grantown that also embraces the potential to link with the proposed new distillery and any extension of the Steam Railway. **Laggan** is at the early stage of looking at options to improve access to Newtonmore.
- e) **Glenmore:** In partnership with Forest Enterprise Scotland we have submitted a successful bid (subject to planning consent) to the Visit Scotland Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to construct a multi-use path through Glenmore linking car parks, visitor attractions and the path network. Detailed design is nearly complete with build scheduled for autumn 2019. Forest Enterprise Scotland is redeveloping their 'visitor management' plan with public consultation planned for Spring 2019.
- f) **Volunteering:** To date 14 trained volunteer rangers are continuing to support the work of six partner ranger services with recruitment early this year generating 12 more people wanting to undertake training. Volunteer ranger output to date amounts to 1.5 years' worth of work supporting partners across the National. This significant output has helped secure an additional 10 months funding from Leader+ to take initial project to nearly four years.
- g) **Education and Inclusion:** Following Board decision in December work developing the Europarc Youth Manifesto into sustainable engagement with young people is underway and with Leader+ funding support partnership with Finish young people will continue over Spring and Summer with a recommendation coming to Board in September 2019. 'Into the Mountain' and 'Writer in Residence' projects encourage people to creatively celebrate the outstanding culture of Cairngorms. Both projects are supported by Creative Scotland, with Woodland Trust supporting the 'Writer' programme.

- h) **Information and Interpretation:** National Park interpretation is being installed in two key visitor attractions; Landmark in Carr-Bridge and Speyside Centre in Dulnain Bridge. New, 2019 versions of Welcome, Tread Lightly and Explore for A Day leaflets & sponsored tear off map are being produced and Gaelic Place Names, Hill Paths widely circulated.
- i) **Snow Roads Scenic Route:** CBP launched the SnowRoads Scenic Route Website and App at their conference in November 2018 and further raised awareness with four half day workshops in communities along the route in February 2019. This work won the Aberdeen City and Shire 2018 Tourism Award for innovation. CBP has secured Visit Scotland Growth Fund support to deliver an £80k project that uses the SnowRoads to target international buyers in France, Germany, Scandinavia and North America for the first time, encouraging them to list the Cairngorms for travellers who design their own itineraries and arrange their own travel plans.

Rural Development:

- a) **Local Development Plan 2020:** Consultation on the Proposed LDP is ongoing until 5 April. Seven drop-in information events have been held across the National Park with approximately 250 people attending and a special consultation event was held for CBP members attracting about 20 attendees. At mid-March there had been 55 formal representations. The social media used as part of the consultation, particularly the video fly-overs of each community, had proved very popular had been viewed over 25,000 times.
- b) **Planning casework:** The Planning Committee have approved significant planning applications to further extend the Speyside Way towards Kingussie, redevelop the site of the former Spittal of Glenshee Hotel, and recently, proposal for a new healthcare facility in Aviemore. During February, Speymalt Whisky Distributors, the parent company of Gordon and Macphail, held a public exhibition in Grantown-on-Spey for their proposed new distillery south of the town. CNPA drew together the promoters of four potentially positive developments near Grantown – the steam railway extension, the A95 trunk road upgrade, the new distillery and the community path link to Dulnain Bridge.
- c) **Cairngorms Business Barometer:** The Cairngorms Business Barometer for Q4 for 2018 showed a reduction in customers and turnover compared to previous quarters. There was also a decrease in business confidence compared to previous quarters and many businesses were concerned about being unable to fill vacancies. CBP noted that the funicular closure and consequent negative national publicity about the area was likely to have played a significant role. Meanwhile the overall level of support provided to businesses from a range of organisations was well above average for recent periods. Report is available here <https://visitcairngorms.com/barometer>.
- d) **Economic Action Plan:** The Board approved the Action Plan in December and we are due to go out to consultation in Spring. This has been delayed to refine the actions and avoid overlap and potential for confusion with the LDP consultation.

- e) **Tourism Action Plan:** A comprehensive update on tourism activity is provided in a separate board paper on this agenda.
- f) **Affordable Housing Delivery:** Staff and Board members attended the Rural Housing Conference in Birnam in early March. The following week a positive meeting took place of our Community-led Housing Group, involving representatives from Aviemore, Dulnain Bridge, Boat of Garten, Carrbridge, Tomintoul, Kincaig, Braemar and Ballater. A number of those communities are actively scoping community housing projects with the support of CNPA and Highland Small Communities Housing Trust and are making use of the Scottish Government's Rural Housing Fund to progress their plans.
- g) **A9 Dualling project:** CNPA removed its objection to the proposals at Killiecrankie where additional survey information had been collected and Historic Environment Scotland were satisfied. On the Dalraddy to Slochd section CNPA considers the provision for non-motorised users between Aviemore and Carrbridge is insufficient and has objected. Transport Scotland are currently leading a study to look at route options for new path provision.
- h) **Community-led development:** Staff continue to support community led project development throughout the Park. The Highland Wildlife Park have been successful in their HLF bid but Am Fasgah were not successful on this occasion. Staff continue to support Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey and the Marr Area Partnership in their CDO roles and supported recent Community Action Planning work in Kingussie. The Association of Cairngorms Communities, and their associated Planning Representatives Network, met earlier in March.
- i) **Badenoch Great Place Project:** The most recent Project Board was held in early March. Project is now well established and multiple project lines are being progressed. Work on the Interpretation & Marketing strategy is well under way as is the work to scope an Alternative Tourist Route for Badenoch. Arts competition has started and Gaelic place names project due to start very soon. The National Lottery Heritage Fund (formerly HLF) have agreed to some programme changes within the project as the practical scope of delivery has become clear.
- j) **Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund:** We are anticipating supporting at least two applications within the Park for this fund managed by SNH, looking for 10 major projects to be delivered by 2022. Application closing date is mid-April.
- k) **Strengthening Communities Conference, 27 to 28 May in Aviemore:** We have arranged for contributions to this national conference being organised by HIE by Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey and Badenoch Great Place Project. And plans are developing for two significant Fringe events for local stakeholders focused on key rural development issues in the Park: Involving young people, rural broadband (RI00 project), community-led housing delivery and community engagement in land management.
- l) **Digital connectivity:** Next meeting of Digital Connectivity Steering Group is planned for late May. Seminars to be organised to promote roll out of improved broadband to

economic development sites near Grantown – potential for further such events in future.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- a) There has been a range of stakeholder engagement meetings including meetings with Simon Skinner CEO NTS, Stuart Younie CEO Mountaineering Scotland, Simon Hodge CEO of Crown Estate Scotland, Anne McColl Scottish Director of RSPB, Roger Knight Director Spey Fisheries Board, Simon Hodgson CEO of Forest and Land Scotland, Jim Savage CEO Aberdeenshire Council, Charlotte Wright CEO HIE, Andrew Lockerbie BASI, Directors Glenshee Ski Resort.
- b) The CEO and Convenor have met with SCNP, SE Link Hilltracks Group, THC Leader and Convenor. The CEO and Convenor also attended the 5 Board member evenings for potential candidates.
- c) The CEO has attended EELG, HIE Talent Attraction Group, CoHI Chief Officers Group, CPP Groups, and Funicular Response Group.
- d) There has been a number of other stakeholder events covered in other parts of this report

Communications:

- a) **Cairngorms Nature Campaign:** The Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend events programme will be launched by 1 April with over 60 events planned for 10 – 13 May across the Park. The Conservation update covers the launch of CNAP.
- b) **Make It Yours Campaign:** Some 290 visitor facing staff across the National Park have participated in this training programme that shares why the Cairngorms is designated a National Park, its special qualities and, using the visitor survey data, looks at the experiences and information people are likely to want.
- c) **Partner Visitor Information Centres:** Local Information Centres (LIC) - following a reduction in support for information centres by Visit Scotland and Local Authorities CNPA has agreed to support ten partner local information centres with; promotion, information, interpretation and knowledge sharing.
- d) **Corporate Communications:** The [Cairngorms Forest Strategy](#) and [Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2018-2024](#), following public consultation, have been published on the CNPA Website and the [proposed Local Development Plan](#), following consultation on the Main Issues Report, has been prepared for consultation until 5th April. During 2018, our digital communications activities resulted in 240,268 website sessions and 33,072 social media followers with a combined reach of 3.9 million.
- e) **CNPA Board Elections:** A media campaign and public meetings held in each ward has resulted in 25 candidates being nominated for the CNPA Board elections – the most the CNPA has ever had. Ongoing promotion to encourage residents to vote will continue until Highland Council announce the winners for Wards 1,2 & 5 on 21 March and for Ward 3 on 28 March (delayed by one week due to an error regarding the voting papers issued by Highland Council). Ward 4 was uncontested.

- f) **EUROPARC Conference 2018:** The [EUROPARC conference](#) report has been prepared and sent to the EUROPARC Federation to share with their members and publish on their website. The [Youth Manifesto](#), launched at the conference, has led to the Cairngorms National Park Authority developing a Youth project to take forward the recommendations presented in the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto.

Organisational Development:

- a) **Office Extension Project:** Staff are settling well in the new space, though we are reviewing snagging issues regularly. Staff will have the second formal opportunity at the Staff Consultative Forum at the end of March to raise and discuss the “highlights” and “shadows” associated with working in the extension and impacts on the general working space.

With regards the old building, architects have been appointed to review and redesign the meeting and informal space.

- b) **Staffing update:** Since December, the following recruitment has taken place:
- i. Stephanie Wade, Planning Officer (Development Management) joined the Authority on 1st February. Stephanie has a permanent contract.
 - ii. Sarah Henshall, Conservation Officer also joined the Authority on 1st February. Sarah has a permanent contract.
 - iii. Emma Wilson was appointed to the Planning Manager (Development Management) post, and Dan Harris was appointed to the Planning Manager (Forward Planning and Service Improvement) post. These appointments were made following a competitive internal recruitment process, and both officers moved from their current Planning Officer posts into the management posts on 1st March.
 - iv. We are currently recruiting two Planning Officers to replace Emma and Dan.

- c) **Youth Employment:** : On-going commitment to supporting Youth Employment, as follows:
- i. We are currently recruiting a 3-month internship, the purpose of which is to collate accurate information on where there are currently hill tracks across the National Park. It is hoped that the internship will commence in May.
 - ii. We have supported employability events as follows: -
 1. In December the HR team attended a business breakfast at Grantown Grammar to explore opportunities for local businesses to work with and support youth employment.
 2. In March the HR team did workshops with S5 and S6 students at Kingussie High School on interview skills. These involved mock interviews, confidence skills and employability advice.
 3. In March a team of staff supported Inverness Royal Academy’s youth employment programme for S2 students. This involved workshop style presentations on career paths and employability advice.
 - iii. We are supporting UHI with two work placements as follows: -
 1. A B.Sc. (Hons) Geography student will spend 4 weeks in April working with staff in the following teams: - Conservation, HLF

- project, Peatland project, Land Management advisers, Outdoor Access and Planning
2. A B.Sc. (Hons) Environmental Science student will spend 2 weeks in October doing a similar but contracted version of the above placement.
- d) **Organisational Development Strategy 2:** We have now completed procurement and commenced design and implementation of a digital customer relationship management system (CRM) through which we aim to significantly enhance our organisational management information on our various contacts with key stakeholders and improve our engagement with them. We aim for the system to go live by the end of May 2019.
- e) **Shared Services:** Shared services as follows: -
- i. Continued work to provide HR support the Scottish Land Commission has included the development of new policies, recruitment of two new staff and the development, staff consultation and submission of the 2019/20 pay remit.
 - ii. We have also supported SNH by providing a member of staff on a short-term secondment to support their pension data cleanse exercise.
- f) **UKNP:** Cairngorms NPA continues to lead on the establishment of a national charity to support the work of National Park Partnerships in seeking corporate support for the activities within National Parks. Contact with the Charities Commission for England and Wales at the beginning of March suggested that the process is close to securing approval charity registration for the entity, with some minor amendments needed to the proposed charitable objects.
- g) **LEADER:** The February meeting of the Cairngorms Trust as the Local Action Group Cairngorms LEADER confirmed support for five further applications, bringing the Cairngorms allocation more than fully committed. The Trustees have ranked the projects and funding will be offered to three of these five projects with the remaining two to be potentially funded either through underspends on existing projects, if any are identified, or through an application for additional allocations from central funds should underspends from other LEADER LAG areas be clawed back. This latter possibility is unlikely to be known until July / August 2019.

Future Dates for Diary

- a) Cairngorms Nature Big Weekend - 10 – 13 May 2019. It would be great for board members to attend events across the weekend.

Grant Moir
March 2019

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Board Convener Report – For Information

Since my last update I have met with a number of external stakeholders including the Leaders of three of our Local Authority partners, the Woodland Trust, the Scottish Campaign for National Parks and the Chair of the Cairngorm Business Partnership. These were all productive meetings and we will continue to seek to build even stronger relationships with all our stakeholders, in particular our communities. This brings me on to our direct Board elections process, which has seen a fantastic level of engagement from our communities.

A record 25 candidates standing for election, 22 of them in wards 1, 2 & 3! Whilst we will need to improve engagement in wards 4 & 5 ahead of the next elections, this level of interest in our National Park and its future is something to be welcomed and celebrated. A considerable amount of work was done by our senior staff, and in particular our Communications Team, in promoting these elections. I would like to thank all those involved, including Board members, in the publicity of the elections. By the time this report is issued, the results will have been declared for wards 1, 2 & 5, and Eleanor Mackintosh will have been formally declared elected in ward 4. The direct elections are important, as it gives the communities we serve a key opportunity to influence who will have a say on the future of the National Park and I'm sure we will be looking at more ways to grow on this engagement going forward.

Over the past month or so I have also attended some of the draft LDP consultation sessions with other members. The Braemar event that I attended was particularly busy, with a lot of local people positively engaging in the process. My thanks to Board members who made it along to support our Planning Team at these events, and I would urge all Board members to encourage anyone they know who may be interested in the issues raised in the draft LDP to respond before the Friday 5th April deadline.

Finally, at the most recent CoHI meeting in Orkney, there were a number of relevant topics to the Park discussed, including the National Transport Strategy Review and what the Shared Prosperity Fund will look like post Brexit. In relation to the transport discussion I raised the issue of poor rural transport networks and the knock-on effect that is having on rural depopulation of young people, and the wider economy as a result. These concerns were shared by partners around the table including Highland Council & UHI and this was formally noted as an outcome. I also expressed a view that areas such as the National Park could lose out under any future Shared Prosperity Fund if decisions weren't taken locally, and this too was noted as an outcome. Going forward a number of our partners have expressed an interest in presenting a paper at a future CoHI about the issues facing young people in the Highlands & Islands and I have put a bid in for our Youth Manifesto to be considered as part of any future presentation.

Xander McDade
Board Convener

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITYFormal Board Paper | 29th March 2019**External Engagements (1st December 2018 – 15th March 2019)**

In addition to scheduled Board meetings and internal meetings, I have attended the following external engagements in my capacity as Convener of the Board since our last Board meeting.

Date	Engagement	Venue
13/12	Directly Elected Board Member Public meeting	Tomintoul Discovery Centre
17/12	Directly Elected Board Member Public meeting	The Hub, Aviemore
21/12	Aviemore Community Event	Aviemore
14/1	Woodland Trust Scotland meeting with Eleanor Garty, and Peter Lowe, along with Will Boyd Wallis	Pitlochry
15/1	Aberdeenshire Council meeting with Cllr Gifford and Jim Savage	Aberdeen
31/1	Moray Council meeting with Graham Leadbitter	CNPA Office, Grantown
7/2	Visitor Giving meeting with Cairngorms Business Partnership	CNPA Office, Ballater
7/2	Braemar Draft LDP Consultation Event with Geva Blackett	Braemar Village Hall
14/2	Strathspey Railway meeting with John Yule and Bert Nicholson, Basil Dunlop, Andrew McCracken	CNPA Office, Grantown
21/2	Cairngorms Nature Parliamentary Reception with Geva Blackett, Judith Webb & Doug McAdam.	Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh
21/2	Blair Atholl LDP Consultation Event with Judith Webb	Blair Atholl Village Hall
4/3	CoHI Conference	Kirkwall, Orkney
13/3	SCNP meeting with John Thomson and other members	Pitlochry
15/3	Highland Council meeting with Bill Lobban and Margaret Davidson along with Grant Moir	Highland Council, Inverness

Board Updates

Gaener Rodger

New CNPA Board member, Gaener Rodger, attended A 'Braw' Burns Bash, a Burns Night celebration for the Year of Young People (YOYP) 2018 with the YOYP 2018 Highland Ambassadors. This event was to celebrate all the hard work and contributions from young people and their supporters that has made YOYP 2018 such a huge success. It was an evening of live music, ceilidh dancing, food and fun. The inspirational Stefan Hoggan, retired para-athlete, swimming coach and motivational speaker hosted the evening. Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, also came along to thank Scotland's young people for taking part in such an iconic year, which included the launch of the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto.

Gaener Rodger, attended the 'Environmental Volunteering in the Cairngorms' event in Carrbridge on 23rd February. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet some of the current volunteers and many partners that offer volunteering opportunities across the Cairngorms National Park. Whether you are interested in monitoring the flora and fauna of the NP, maintaining some of our X kilometres of mountain paths or leading walks and activities, there is something for everyone. Anyone that is interested can view the latest opportunities at <https://cairngorms.co.uk/caring-future/volunteers/opportunities/>

Rebecca Badger

Two events were held in Carrbridge during February to promote the Capercaillie project. I attended both of them. They were well attended by both people from Carrbridge and people from other communities in the National Park. Frank Law (ex Kinveachy Head Gamekeeper, Carrbridge resident and member of the Carrbridge Capercaillie Working Group) gave an inspiring presentation describing the capercaillie heritage of Carrbridge, the current state of the population, the way it is monitored and the importance of the village and surrounding woodlands for the bird. Carolyn Robertson (Project Manager, Capercaillie project) described the project principles, the project funding, the basis for the pilot project that is currently underway and how the community is central to the success of the project.

After the presentations people were invited to circulate to discuss different aspects of the project, to provide insight for example about how they use the woodlands around the village, and their views on signage, to share stories about capercaillie, and to find out how they can help the project. All in all there was a real buzz about the events, as a member of the local working group I was responsible for collecting stories from people about capercaillie and it was great to hear the amusing anecdotes and the passion and enthusiasm from attendees for the long term survival of this species. As a Carrbridge resident, I will continue to be a member of the local working group for this exciting project which is breaking new ground with its community-led approach towards conservation.

I attended the Volunteer Cairngorms event, also in Carrbridge at the end of February. This too was an inspiring event full of volunteering enthusiasts. Around 20 organisations had stands to promote a huge range of volunteering with opportunities ranging from crafting, to building footpaths and from monitoring wildlife to leading health walks. Pete Crane and Mike Woolvin gave inspiring presentations and attendees were able to circulate to different stands, with coffee and cake to discuss volunteering opportunities in the National Park. I

would estimate at least 50 people attended this event which provided me with another insight to the enthusiasm that exists among the park communities and visitors for so much of the work that the CNPA is involved in.

Willie Munro, Douglas McAdam and Fiona McLean

On Wednesday 13th March Doug McAdam and I were at a Scottish Government Induction and Networking Session for new Ministerial appointees. There was a chance to chat and compare notes with people who have been appointed to various boards. Kate Forbes MSP in her Ministerial role rather than constituency role did a very good presentation and question and answer session. Her key themes were around ambition, collaboration, innovation, integration, prevention and empowerment. She spoke about appetite for risk and the use of data and digital solutions.

On Thursday 14th March Fiona Mclean and I were at the Scottish Tourism Alliance Conference at SECC Glasgow. Fiona Hislop MSP gave a Ministerial address. Her key messages were about doing things differently, future proofing tourism in Scotland, quality and a world class experience. She also spoke about the impact of visitor numbers and other attractions in the area following the opening of the V&A. There was also a lot of discussion about the opportunities that going digital presents for marketing and efficiency in various tourism business activities.