
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING **held in the Spey & Dee meeting rooms, CNPA HQ,** **Grantown on Spey** **on Friday 20 September 2019 at 11.00am**

PRESENT

Xander McDade (Convener)
Peter Argyle
Geva Blackett
Carolyn Caddick
Pippa Hadley
Janet Hunter
John Kirk
John Latham
Douglas McAdam

Eleanor Mackintosh
Willie McKenna
Ian McLaren
Dr Fiona McLean
William Munro
Anne Rae Macdonald
Dr Gaener Rodger
Judith Webb

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive,
Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development,
Pete Mayhew, Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience,
Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services, Items 1-7
Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development, Items 6 - 9
Alan Smith, Outdoor Learning Officer, Items 6 & 7
Robert Cain, Youth Action Group, Items 6 & 7
Liam McAllan, Youth Action Group, Items 6 & 7
Christopher Faulk, Youth Action Group, Items 6 & 7
Reece Musgrave, Youth Action Group, Items 6 & 7
Kerri Milligan, Youth Action Group, Items 6 & 7
Jessica Lawson, Youth Action Group, Items 6 & 7
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board.

Apologies:

Deirdre Falconer

Derek Ross

Welcome and Introduction

1. Xander McDade, the Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Grantown on Spey.
2. Apologies were noted for Deirdre Falconer and Derek Ross.

Declarations of Interest

3. Declarations of interest were invited.
4. Gaener Rodger declared an Indirect Interest in
 - Paper 2 Reason: Proposed Youth Action Group Member

Minutes of Last Meetings – for approval

5. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 14 June 2019 were agreed with no amendments.
6. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 June 2019 were agreed with no amendments.
7. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 August 2019 were agreed subject to the following amendment:
 - At Para 2. – Congratulations to Peter Argyle and not Peter Ferguson, to be amended.

Matters Arising

8. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the minutes of the meeting on 14 June 2019:
 - Action Point at Para 10 (i.) – In Hand – Paper on Climate Change Emergency response will go to the Board in December 2019
 - Action Point at Para 18 (i) – In Hand – Information on socio-economic background of John Muir Award participants being collated and will be distributed.
9. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the minutes of the meeting on 28 June 2019:
 - Action Point at Para 22 (i) – Closed – Final Policy papers to support

implementation of Board Fees issued.

10. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the minutes of the meeting on 16 August 2019:
 - Action Point at Para 19 (i) – In Hand – Schedule Four documents are currently undergoing their final checks.
 - Action Point at Para 19 (ii) – In Hand – Submission documents for LDP examination are currently being finalised.
 - Action Point at Para 19 (iii) – In Hand – Submitted to the Scottish Government today.

11. Grant Moir, the CEO presented a review of the Planning Committee Standing Orders for consideration by the Board. He explained that the paper follows agreement of revised Standing Orders for the Cairngorms National Park Authority at the Board meeting of 14 June 2019, and action agreed at that meeting to undertake a review of Planning Standing Orders to ensure they are in keeping with the Board’s revised Standing Orders. He added that they Planning Committee Standing Orders had been reviewed by the Planning Committee at their meeting last week and their amendments had been incorporated into this version as Annex I.

12. **The Board agreed to:**
 - a) **rescind the Board’s agreed action of March 2019 to increase the quorum for Planning Committee to 13 to be set out in the Committee’s Standing Orders;**
 - b) **approve the Planning Committee Standing Orders set out in this paper with immediate effect.**

13. **Action Points Arising: None.**

CEO Report & Convener Update (Paper I)

14. CEO introduced Paper I which highlights the main strategic work streams that are being directed by Management Team. CEO explained that these are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver National Park Partnership Plan priorities. He highlighted the following areas:
 - a) **Cairngorms Capercaillie Project** – Dr Alistair Bath chosen by the community was trialling a social science approach to wildlife/ human conflict resolution. He had devised a questionnaire for visitors and another for

residents which had now been distributed. The next step would be to hold workshops to identify the community's concerns, common ground and opportunities.

- b) **Opening of Speyside Way Spur** – would be taking place on 22nd September 2019, praise for Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership and all the work that they do.
- c) **Visitor Experience** – Open evenings on 25th and 26th September 2019 were planned to seek views on the off road route between Aviemore and Carrbridge. Work was ongoing between Grantown and Dulnain Bridge. Head of Visitor Services added that the Kingussie community were looking to improve the active travel in their town and that Laggan were as well.
- d) **Mountains and the People Project** - The upgraded Beinn of Ghlo path would be opened by John Swinney MSP on 27th September 2019, this was the final section of the project in the Cairngorms.
- e) **Volunteering** – Have just finished training the latest group of volunteers and they are now out and about on the ground, should be just shy of 40 volunteer rangers in the Cairngorms National Park by summer 2020 putting in hundreds of hours of volunteering.
- f) **Planning Casework** – interesting high profile casework at present concerning Cairngorm Mountain and hill tracks.
- g) **Badenoch Great Place** – The Badenoch Heritage Festival will finish on 22nd September, all the events had been well attended and there would be story telling this evening with Merryn Glover the National Park's Writer in Residence assisting.
- h) **Economic Action Plan** – Consultation ends today. The Convener reported that his visits, along with other Board members, to businesses had proved very successful and worthwhile.
- i) **Cairngorms Nature Campaign** – over 3270 people attended this year which is over 1000 more than last year. It has fast become one of the biggest nature festivals in Scotland.

15. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- a) How much weight would be given to the capercaillie project visitor survey? The CEO advised that it was the community group who asked for a survey aimed at visitors be carried out, to see if their perceptions were in line with those of residents. The main focus was on residents.
- b) Had there been any progress on the Tread Lightly campaign? Head of Visitor Services advised that there had been a meeting with SNH and other organisations to discuss how to best engage with people on the Scottish

Outdoor Access Code but that an agreed national approach had not yet been reached.

- c) Concern that the progress on the Deeside Way had halted. The CEO explained that the issue was that the work to the path from Braemar to Bridge of Dee did not fit within Sustrans funding criteria. He advised that the SRDP funding was not available at present and funding for access through SNH was not available either. He added that the planning permission was in place, and as soon as appropriate funding is identified, an application would be submitted.
- d) Concern raised regarding the new criteria that Sustrans are using and the impact this has on rural projects. CEO advised that he had written to the Scottish Government regarding this issue and was following that up.
- e) Head of Visitor Services advised that on the 11th November 2019 it is the 100th anniversary of the birth of the poet Hamish Henderson and that the Cateran Ecomuseum were holding an event.
- f) A Board Member suggested that it would be good for the Board to meet with the consultant to discuss the issues identified from the survey findings. The CEO advised that an appropriate date would be sought. .
- g) Would it be possible to circulate copies of the visitor and residents surveys in relation to Carrbridge? CEO agreed to circulate them to all who were interested.
- h) When would the report illustrating the progress of the Cairngorms Moorland Partnership be available? CEO advised that further work was being carried out and the intention was to prepare and bring a report to the March 2020 or June 2020 Board meeting.
- i) Could the Snowroads be extended to Dalwhinnie? CEO explained that it was not in the National Park Partnership Plan, its purpose was to increase visits to the less visited areas of the National Park and was not intended to be a circular route. The Badenoch Great Place Project was focusing on a different product which would help the Dalwhinnie community and others in the Badenoch area. Director of Rural Development and Planning added that this was the rationale for the project.
- j) During initial talks with businesses as part of the Economic Action Plan consultation had the issue of housing for staff been identified? The Convener advised that it had, along with the availability of commercial land. Director of Planning and Rural Development advised that he was drawing up a paper for the December 2019 Board meeting on the Economic Action Plan which would summarise all of the feedback received.
- k) As a result of the Board visit hosted by the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership earlier in September how was the need for estates to have fire plans in place progressing? The CEO advised that the Authority were encouraging fire plans to be developed but ultimately the onus was on estates to put plans in

place however the Authority were happy to provide support.

16. **The Board noted the Paper.**

17. **Actions:**

- i. **CEO to look at Board dates and see if it would be possible to invite Alistair Bath to discuss his findings with the Board.**
- ii. **Copies of the Resident and Visitor surveys surrounding Carrbridge to be circulated the Board.**

Cairngorms Youth Action (Paper 2)

18. Alan Smith, Outdoor Learning Officer introduced this paper which seeks the CNPA's support for the proposed structure and remit for Cairngorms Youth Action. The young people Robert Cain, Liam McAllan, Christopher Faulk, Reece Musgrave, Kerri Milligan and Jessica Lawson gave a presentation and showed a video. He highlighted that the launch of the group would take place on 7th October and Mairi Gougeon, Minister for the Environment would attend the event.
19. The Convener thanked the young people and acknowledged the incredible amount of time they had put into this project, which was a huge achievement. He extended his thanks to Alan Smith for coordinating it all. He added that since their visit to Greece in April, people were starting to think about how to engage young people and involve them in structures.
20. The Board considered the detail of the paper and discussed the following points:
 - a) A Board Member thanked the young people for their presentations and commented that they had found it interesting and were very much in support of what they were doing, she added that she was very impressed with what they had achieved in a short time and was excited for what the future holds.
 - b) A Board member asked about the structure of the group and had any thought been given into how they would maintain the gender balance and diversity ensuring an even spread across the National Park and wider Scotland? Outdoor Learning Officer explained that that the group had had a discussion around age. The young people agreed that they were happy with the age range and the spread of where the young people come from but agreed to be flexible and would use enthusiasm to attract any gaps and were looking to work in partnership with other groups.

- c) Suggestion made that young people should have greater involvement to participate in Board Groups. The Convener explained that this was the purpose of having two Board Members linked to the Cairngorms Youth Action Team, to ensure a close link with the group so that their views can be brought and fed into Board discussions on a strategic level. Outdoor Learning Officer added that youth governance was a key section where they did not only want to involve them in but also look at how Boards and Committees are run. The Convener explained that when looking to develop the next National Park Partnership Plan young people's views would be a critical part of the development of that plan. He told the young people that their views would need to be embedded all the way through it.
 - d) A Board Member asked the young people if they felt that the project was moving on as fast as they would have liked and if not what could be done to help this? Outdoor Learning Officer explained that once the official launch on 7th October 2019 had taken place, things would move at a faster pace. He added that they had been building the project slowly to ensure longevity.
 - e) A Board Member advised that he could pass on details of the young farmers group. This was welcomed.
21. The Convener thanked the young people on behalf of the Board, he stated that they were inspirational and that they should not underestimate the level of work they had put into it and should be very proud of themselves. The Board gave them a round of applause.
22. **The Board:**
- a) **Endorse and commend the work of the Youth Steering Group in developing Cairngorms Youth Action to date.**
 - b) **Agreed the proposed structure and remit for Cairngorms Youth Action as developed by the Youth Steering Group.**
 - c) **Agreed Board members Gaener Rodger and Derek Ross to be involved in the project.**
23. CEO advised that the budget for the Youth Action group would come to the Board in the normal way.
24. **Action Point arising:**
- i. **John Kirk to pass on the contact for the Young Farmers group onto the Outdoor Learning Officer.**

Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report (Paper 3)

25. The CEO introduced Paper 3 which presents the Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to the Board. The Authority had developed a good relationship with the internal auditors BDO, there had been an issue around business continuity and work was ongoing on that issue over the next few months. Both auditors were happy with it and it would be laid before parliament.
26. Judith Webb Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee said all was submitted on time.
27. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) Had mitigation been planned for the risks of Brexit? CEO advised that they had for the risks surrounding LEADER and that the CNPA were part of an SG network on Brexit preparations.
 - b) Comment made that the risks could be an opportunity for change. The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, Judith Webb, explained that the Audit & Risk Committee at their last meeting had requested a whole Board discussion on risk appetite focussing on not only the negatives but also the opportunities. The CEO advised that there would an Audit & Risk Committee training session on Thursday 14th November 2019 in Braemar (afternoon prior to the Planning Committee meeting). All Board members would be invited to attend and an invite would be forthcoming shortly.
 - c) Comment made that the Cairngorms LEADER project has proved as successful as it could be, had the Audit & Risk Committee picked up on this and were they feeding this forwards?. He noted that this could be looked at going forward.
 - d) Director of Rural Development and Planning advised that the Chairs of Scottish LEADER Groups had recognised the demand for a funding stream to follow on from LEADER, post Brexit. He added that there was a Scottish Rural Action event taking place in the Grant Arms at 7pm on Monday 23rd September 2019 focussed on building a case for post Brexit community funding and encouraged Members to attend.
28. **The Board considered and noted the report.**
29. The Convener thanked the Audit & Risk Committee on behalf of the Board.
30. **Action Point arising:**
 - i. **Audit & Risk Committee training details on Thursday 14th November 2019 to be circulated to the Board.**

AOCB – Board Members Representational Responsibilities

31. The Convener introduced this Paper which presents a summary of the current position regarding Board members' responsibilities for representing the Authority. The paper seeks to establish the agreed basis for calculating top up time allocations and Board fee payments from 1 October 2019.
32. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and the following query was raised:
 - a) Three days' worth had been scheduled against the Cairngorms Nature Strategy group however there were four meetings scheduled to take place the following year. It was explained that this was because 0.75 of a day was allocated to each meeting.
33. Carolyn Caddick, Chair of the Staffing and Recruitment gave an update, she made the following points:
 - a) The next Staffing & Recruitment Committee would take place on Friday 13th December 2019 instead of 6th December 2019, this was to allow staff to undergo Insights training.
 - b) The Committee had been working on developing a new Board skills matrix and the survey is being developed using survey monkey. A link to the survey would be circulated in October with very clear instructions on how to complete it.
 - c) The Committee had agreed in principal not to identify individuals but that may need to be discussed further in the future.
 - d) The Committee at their meeting that morning had discussed the need for an equalities champion to assist with revitalising equalities in the National Park and taking a volunteer from within the Committee grouping. It was proposed that Fiona McLean take on that role given her experience and would support Kate Christie, Head of Organisational Development in taking that work forward. This was agreed by the Board.
34. **The Board agreed the Board Members' representational responsibilities on groups as detailed in the paper with the following addition:**
 - a) **Fiona McLean to take on role of Equalities Champion.**
35. The CEO provided an update on the following items:
 - a) The UK National Park's conference had taken place this week, the New Horizon Award was won by the Cairngorms Youth ambassador Xander Johnston who had clocked up over 500 hours of voluntary work in the Cairngorms. He added that the Loch Lomond and Trossachs Youth Action Committee had won an award for youth activity.

- b) There would be a public evening presentation on the Climate Emergency being held in Grantown on the 7th October 2019.

36. **Action Point Arising:** **None.**

Date of Next Meeting

- 37. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 6 December 2019, Spey & Dee meeting rooms, CNPA HQ, Grantown on Spey.
- 38. The Public part of this meeting concluded at 12.36.