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## CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Review of Forum membership and Standing Orders</b>
<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Adam Streeter-Smith, Recreation and Access Manager</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>To review the membership of the Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum and Standing Orders</b>
<b>Advice Sought</b>	<b>The Forum is invited to give its advice on the following points which summarise how we intend to proceed:</b>

- a) There is a need for new members this year.
- b) Members will be invited to remain on the Forum until after the 2023 February/March meeting, in order to ensure continuity of advice on the review of Active Cairngorms and its planning process:
- c) New members will be recruited and eligible to attend their first meeting in May 2022.
- d) John Grierson should remain as Convenor until the February/March 2023 meeting and that the elections for Convenor are held then:
- e) There will be three meetings a year – two held virtually and one face to face:
- f) Minor changes to the operating procedures are made.

### **Background**

1. The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum has been operational for over 17 years and most recently operating in exceptional circumstances due to Covid restrictions. This paper considers the future membership of the Forum and the format of meetings going forward.

### **The Objective of reviewing membership**

2. The Park Authority wants to ensure that the Forum continues to be fully functioning and effective, a Forum which is dynamic, responsive to change and, on a continual basis, seeks to bring in fresh skills and experience from new members whilst retaining and valuing the existing member resource. It also ensures the retention of the balance of interests – community, land management and recreation - and an equitable split between the three.
3. Paragraph 3 of the Operating Procedures – written in 2005 – addresses the length of term for Forum members as follows:

- The Forum consists of such persons as are appointed to it by the Park Authority but in line with good practice shall include representation from the following key sectors: Land Managers; Community Interests; Recreational Users; and Public Agencies.
- The Forum shall select a Convenor and Vice Convenor to serve a term of three years.
- Forum members are appointed for a two-year period. After this duration, Forum members will be invited to extend their membership for either one or two years, by self-selection initially, but organised so as to achieve a balance of three-year memberships and four-year memberships, while maintaining a balance across the four sectors.
- Future appointments will be made for a term of three years. No member shall serve more than six continuous years on the Forum.

### **Current Forum members' length of term**

4. Current Forum members were given terms of membership for three years originally. However, the recent hiatus caused by the pandemic has meant that membership periods have lapsed or been extended. To ensure continuity going forward the Park Authority would like to see existing members stay on for at least another year if their membership period has exceed six years.
5. Last year, one member stood down hence we are looking at recruiting at least one new member. Currently membership stands at 10 members. Nominally representation should be split equally between members who bring experience and connection with land managers; community interests; recreational users; and public agencies. As the minimum number of members of the Forum should be 12.

### **Proceedings of meetings**

6. The last two years of the pandemic has demonstrated that Forum business can be effectively delivered via “virtual” meetings. These meetings offer significant advantages to members in relation to time commitments and travel expenses. However it is also recognised that face to face meetings and the chance to explore topics more fully, especially outside, are important for membership moral and motivation. It is proposed that the spring and autumn meetings are held “virtually” and that a summer face to face meeting is programmed.

### **The Operating procedures**

7. Proposed changes in the number and type of meetings as well as the accepted position that the Forum does not require a Vice Convenor means that minor modification to the operating procedures are required. Annex I sets out the revised changes.

## Annex I

**CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM OPERATING PROCEDURES**

The Cairngorms Local Access Forum is established under section 25 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. It will have a maximum of 21 members and include one CNPA Board member. The Forum will comprise members appointed to it by the Cairngorms National Park Authority. The CNPA and the Forum itself will keep membership of the Forum under review, including a review of the public agency involvement.

**Name and area of operation**

1. The group will be called the CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM (referred to below as the Forum);
2. The Forum's area of operation will include all land and water within and including the boundary of the Cairngorms National Park.

**Objectives and Functions**

The objectives and functions of the Forum shall be:

3. To act as the local access forum for Cairngorms National Park and to undertake the functions of that body in terms of Section 25 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003;
4. To advise the Authority in the review of the Core Paths Plan;
5. To advise the Authority in the review of its Outdoor Access Strategy;
6. To advise the Authority and any other person or body consulting it, on the existence and delineation of rights of way and the exercise of access rights;
7. To promote responsible access and land management through assisting the Authority in publicising the Scottish Outdoor Access Code;
8. To promote discussion and the sharing of knowledge, awareness and good practice in outdoor access matters;
9. To support the provision of appropriate infrastructure that improves responsible access to the countryside for all; and
10. To offer advice that will assist in the resolution of outdoor access disputes.

**Structure and Membership**

11. The Forum consists of such persons as are appointed to it by the Park Authority and in line with good practice shall include representation from the following key

sectors: Land Managers; Community Interests; Recreational Users; and Public Agencies;

12. The Forum shall elect a Convenor to serve a term of three years. Members can stand as Convener for up to, but not exceeding six years;
13. Forum members are appointed for a three-year period. After this duration, Forum members will be invited to extend their membership for one to three years, by self-selection initially, but organised so as to achieve a balance of three-year memberships to six-year memberships;
14. No member shall serve more than six continuous years on the Forum but may reapply after standing down for a minimum period of one year;
15. If a representative fails to attend three consecutive meetings their membership may be rescinded and the CNPA asked to instigate selection of a replacement;
16. During the course of a Forum meeting members are required to declare an interest in an item at the point at which the item is raised. This may not exclude them from the discussion;
17. The public agencies are charged with the responsibility for nominating a suitable officer to attend meetings, or delegate a substitute if the main member is unable to attend.

### **Proceedings of meetings**

18. The Forum will hold meetings no fewer than three times year- two virtual and one face to face. Meetings may be rescheduled but not cancelled;
19. The location of Forum meetings will circulate around the Cairngorms National Park;
20. A review of the operation of the Forum will take place every five years. The review will take the form of an agenda item and discussion.

### **Administration of meetings**

21. CNPA staff will be responsible for the administrative support, accommodation and facilities for meetings of the Forum;
22. The CNPA may provide secretariat for Forum sub-groups at its own discretion.
23. Meeting agendas shall be reviewed and agreed between the Convenor and the CNPA staff as secretariat. Any member may have an input to the agenda through the Convenor. A short briefing paper shall also be supplied to the Convener on all papers submitted in advance of the meeting;
24. All Forum members shall receive business papers by both email and by post to be circulated no less than 5 working days before the next meeting;
25. Comments on papers received prior to the meeting from members who are unable to attend, will be circulated to the whole Forum;
26. Minutes shall be kept of all Forum meetings;
27. Parties with direct involvement in cases being discussed by the Forum will have the right to make short written submissions at the discretion of the Convenor. Submissions will have to be submitted to the Secretariat for circulation seven working days in advance of the Forum meeting.

### **Communication issues**

28. The Forum will endeavour to communicate with organisations and individuals that have an interest in outdoor access by:
29. Making minutes and agendas of meetings widely available to the public through the CNPA website. Papers will also be circulated to CNPA Board members and neighbouring Local Outdoor Access Forums;
30. Communicating via the Press using regular post-meeting press releases when appropriate issues arise. The Forum will target the main local papers, the Forum will also consider communicating where appropriate with more specialist press such as community, land management and recreational user media within the Park boundary. All press communication will be approved by the Convener;
31. Setting up working groups to address specific topic or area based access issues where appropriate. The subgroups may consist of Forum members, external interested parties, specialist advisers and others as agreed by the Forum.

CNPA

(date)