



autumn – winter 2022

cairn

The magazine of the Cairngorms National Park

Elections

YOUR chance to
shape the future
of the Cairngorms
National Park

Inside

Community news:
Affordable
housing push

Nature spotlight:
Wildcat breeding
success



To find out more information on the stories within this magazine please scan the QR code



**Cairngorms
National Park**

**Pàirc Nàiseanta a'
Mhonaidh Ruaidh**

Do you have a question about something in the National Park? The contacts on this page will help you to get to the correct person or organisation to help you.



Business support

GrowBiz

connect@growbiz.co.uk

Cairngorms Business Partnership
office@visitcairngorms.com



Local council services

Aberdeenshire: **01467 534 333**

Angus: angus.gov.uk

Highland: **01349 886 608**

Moray: **0300 123 4561**

Perth & Kinross: **01738 475 000**



Land management - estates and farming

landmanagement@cairngorms.co.uk



Paths and accessing the National Park

outdooraccess@cairngorms.co.uk

outdooraccess-scotland.scot



Planning

All planning questions should go to the relevant local authority in the first instance (see contacts on left) or visit eplanningcnpa.co.uk to view and comment on live applications.



Recruitment and current vacancies

recruitment@cairngorms.co.uk



Volunteering

volunteers@cairngorms.co.uk



Visitor information

visitcairngorms.com

visitscotland.com



Something else?

enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk

Switchboard: **01479 873 535**

Or to visit in person:
Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square
Grantown on Spey
PH26 3HG

Front cover image: view from Creag Bheag near Kingussie © Neiliann Tait / Alamy Stock Photo. **Other images** © Alpha Projects, Airborne Lens, Cairngorms Connect, Charlotte Milburn, Eilidh Cameron, James Lee, James Stevens, Josie Slade, Juno Snowdon, Laurie Campbell, Luke Massey / 2020VISION, Mark Hamblin, Naomi McIntosh, Rachel Keenan and Saving Wildcats.

Fáilte / Welcome

Welcome to this first edition of *Cairn*, a magazine which has been created for all the folk who live and work in the Cairngorms National Park.

We all know how special the National Park is – our majestic munros, rivers and lochs, the variety of rare and endangered species found here, our rich and diverse cultural heritage.

The Park Authority exists to protect and enhance all the things that make the Cairngorms special and this magazine – which will come out three times a year – showcases how we and over 100 partners are going about it.

Collectively, we support projects and activities in every community across the National Park, from nature conservation to planning and business support.

This magazine will bring you news of what's taking place in your area, as well as across the whole National Park.

It will let you know how you can get involved and who to contact if you have ideas or questions for us.

We've also taken steps to ensure this publication is as environmentally friendly as possible. Printed on 100% recycled paper using vegetable-based inks, we'll balance any carbon impacts by creating native Scots pine, birch, rowan, willow and aspen woodland right here in the National Park.

We'd love to hear what you think of this first edition.

You can get in touch with us by calling **01479 873 535** or you can email us on **haveyoursay@cairngorms.co.uk**



Please pass this on when you're finished, or recycle

Issue highlights



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Roy-al opening

400 people gathered for the opening of Castle Roy to the public this autumn. The opening was made possible thanks to 29 years of community-led fundraising by the Castle Roy Trust, including grant funding from the Park Authority.

Power up

A new battery energy storage facility has been approved by the Park Authority's Planning Committee.

The 49.9 MW facility will be built just outside Boat of Garten, next to an existing electricity sub-station. The committee also approved a 200m surface tow on Cairngorm Mountain.

Top of the range

Junior Rangers is an exciting outdoor learning programme for ages 11 to 18. Monthly sessions run in Badenoch and Strathspey and Deeside, and five-day Junior Ranger weeks are also available through local high schools. Check out cairngorms.co.uk/junior-rangers

Green shoots

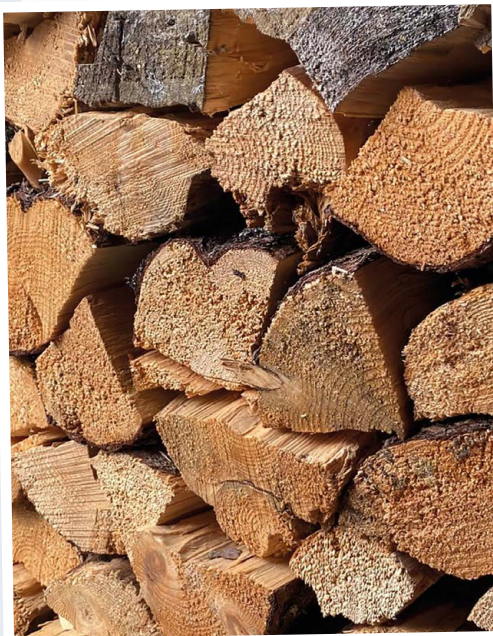
Our new Volunteer Experience Programme is reaching out to people that don't usually have an opportunity to experience nature in the National Park. The programme is working with partners to provide safe and engaging introductions to volunteering. See cairngorms.co.uk/volunteers for more info.

Housing hope

12 new homes are nearing completion in Tomintoul.

The houses, developed by Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust, have been built on the site of an old secondary school and will be available for affordable rent and discounted sale. The project is part-funded by the Park Authority and is supported by the Communities Housing Trust.

Elsewhere, the Cairngorms Business Partnership – supported by Highlands and Islands Enterprise – have launched a partnership to improve access to homes for local workers. Four families who work for businesses near Aviemore moved into new homes earlier in the year and around 30 mid-market rental properties will be made available over the coming years.



Cosy boxes

£242,000 has been awarded to 19 projects through the Cairngorms Community Led Vision Fund, led by Cairngorms Trust and supported by the Park Authority.

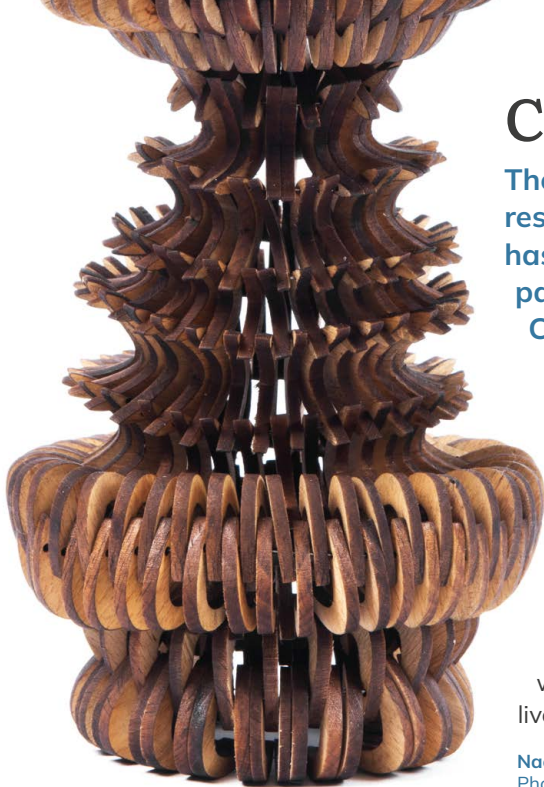
Projects which have received funding include the creation of a log bank in the Marr Area (to the east of the Park) and the provision of 'cosy boxes' to help elderly residents facing fuel poverty in Badenoch. Three communities also received funding to help develop affordable housing, which will hopefully inspire other community-led projects to come forward.

Way ahead

A new £191,000 project will bring major improvements to the Speyside Way through Anagach Woods in Grantown.

The project includes resurfacing the existing path, upgrading drainage to remove muddy sections, and creating a large section of new path. New signage and waymarkers will also be installed.

Work will be completed by the end of 2022 and, whilst visitors should expect some disruption, the Speyside Way will remain open to users throughout. The project is led by the Anagach Woodland Trust and supported by grant funding via Scottish Government's Agri-Environment Climate Scheme, administered by NatureScot.



Culture cabin

The winner of a new arts residency at Inshriach Bothy has just been announced as part of the Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme. Naomi McIntosh will begin a two-week residency later this month.

The residency will allow Naomi to plan and make new work, connecting directly with some of the varied communities in the Park. The project will conclude with a public event where Naomi will share her work with those who live in and visit the area.

Naomi McIntosh. Cocoon 2, 2020
Photo by Juno Snowdon

Spotlight on the Cairngorms

An innovative, low-impact lighting project has illuminated national parks across the UK, including here in the Cairngorms.

Green Space Dark Skies began in the Peak District to mark the 70th anniversary of the Mass Trespass and took in the UK's four highest peaks, as well as visiting Loch Insh earlier this year.

At the heart of the project were 20,000 'Lumenators' – people from all walks of life, each carrying a GPS-enabled light so organisers could create unique patterns in the landscape.

The event at Loch Insh featured storyteller Merryn Glover, musician Willie Campbell and visual artist Claire MacDonald, and specifically targeted people who do not usually get to experience the Cairngorms. This included a group of Ukrainian citizens who had a chance to explore the loch by boat, and guests from Equal Adventure, a community interest company which specialises in offering water sports for disabled people.

A *Countryfile* special on the project aired recently and can be seen at bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001drlr



Top cats

The Saving Wildcats project is celebrating a successful breeding season. 22 wildcat kittens were born in a dedicated breeding for release centre in a quiet area away from visitors at the Highland Wildlife Park, near Kincaig.

It's hoped these kittens will be amongst the first of their kind to be released into the wild in the Cairngorms next year. Led by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, alongside partners including the Park Authority, the project team have been busy conducting fieldwork



across the Cairngorms in preparation for these releases.

They have gathered a significant amount of information about species presence in potential release areas and, whilst there's a lot still to do, many project milestones have already been reached. Visit savingwildcats.org.uk/news-events to find out more.

Bringing back beaver

The Park Authority has been asked by Scottish Government to help bring beavers back to the Cairngorms.

The beaver is a European Protected Species and can bring significant environmental and social benefits, but their impacts need to be carefully managed.

Research commissioned by our Beaver Working Group has identified the Spey catchment as one of the potential areas for release. However, prior to submitting an application to NatureScot, we'll be working closely with land managers and residents to explore options and explain the process in more detail.

A Beaver Officer is currently being recruited to coordinate all our activity with the species. This includes providing advice and support to land managers around mitigation measures, and arranging a series of community drop-in events in the spring.



Bird's eye view

The Park Authority is working with land managers, conservation partners, local communities and government to secure the long-term future of the critically endangered capercaillie.

The latest national capercaillie survey, undertaken by RSPB Scotland and part-funded by the Park Authority, has estimated that only 542 of the birds remain in Scotland, with 85% living in the National Park.



There are several issues facing capercaillie, not least available habitat, predators and human disturbance. The Cairngorms Capercaillie Project is working with communities and land managers to increase awareness of the bird's plight; reducing disturbance in sensitive areas alongside mountain bikers, dog walkers and other recreational users; and funding predator control work through a dedicated project gamekeeper.

The project is also waiting on the results of a genetic diversity study into the capercaillie population to determine whether the gene pool needs to be expanded. To find out more visit cairngormscapercaillie.scot

For peat's sake

Our Peatland ACTION team has been working with local civil and plant businesses to increase the number of skilled contractors able to carry out peatland restoration work.

Peatland restoration forms a key part of the new National Park Partnership Plan, with a target of restoring at least 38,000 ha by 2045. Contractor availability is a major hurdle to scaling up activity. To tackle this – and to create further green rural jobs – a new entrants' programme has been created, providing training for eight local contractors so far (with more to follow). To get involved or to learn more see cairngorms.co.uk/cairngorms-peatland-action



High flyers

Critically endangered pine hoverflies have bred successfully thanks to conservation efforts by the Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms partnership, part-funded by the Park Authority.

The species is only found in a single location in the UK, a small forest patch in the National Park. Surveys found larvae in previously unoccupied tree stumps, meaning at least some of the pine hoverflies bred by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland and released across three sites in October 2021 and March 2022 have completed a full breeding cycle, marking a real step forward in efforts to save the species.



Wader work

Despite declining nationally, waders continue to do well in the eastern Cairngorms, where members of the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership have taken steps to conserve these special birds. Latest figures show that populations of a variety of wader species on partner landholdings remain stable.

Local venison

Cairngorms Connect have partnered with Lynbreck Croft to produce a range of venison products. Project partners control deer on their land to reduce the impact of grazing on the landscape, and this quality local produce is not only sustainable but helps support conservation work on the ground.



Perfect pair

Efforts to protect the rare twinflower have been showcased in a recent episode of the BBC's *Landward*.

The Cairngorms Rare Plants and Wild Connections Project, led by Plantlife and supported by the Park Authority, features in episode 19 of the programme and can be viewed at bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001dljp



Board elections: what you need to know

- You can stand in one of five areas (see map on right)
- You don't need to live in the Park to stand, but do to vote
- You need to be 21 or older to be a board member
- Election day is 23 March 2023
- You have until 15 February 2023 to submit your paperwork
- Board members contribute two or three days a month and are paid for their time
- We're seeking candidates from a wide range of backgrounds - including yours

Get on board!

In March 2023 residents of the National Park will vote and elect members to join the board of the Cairngorms National Park Authority. There are places to be filled across five electoral wards and the Park Authority are seeking people from a wide range of backgrounds to stand.

Could that be you?

Back in 2011 Katrina Farquhar decided to stand for the Park Authority board. She explains: "When I first considered standing for election I was unsure if I was the right type of person for the board of a major organisation. I assumed I'd need lots of experience in policy making or local government. But what I came to realise was that an effective board needs a diverse membership that represents all the people of the National Park. An understanding of what it means to live and work here is just as important a qualification as experience in a particular sector.

"Being a board member was personally rewarding and gave me new skills and confidence. You get training when you start and because meeting dates are published 12 months in advance there is plenty of time to plan around other work or family commitments."



"Locally-elected members bring a unique perspective to the board which is key to helping the Park Authority deliver for the communities and businesses within the Park."

**Anne Rae MacDonald,
current board member**





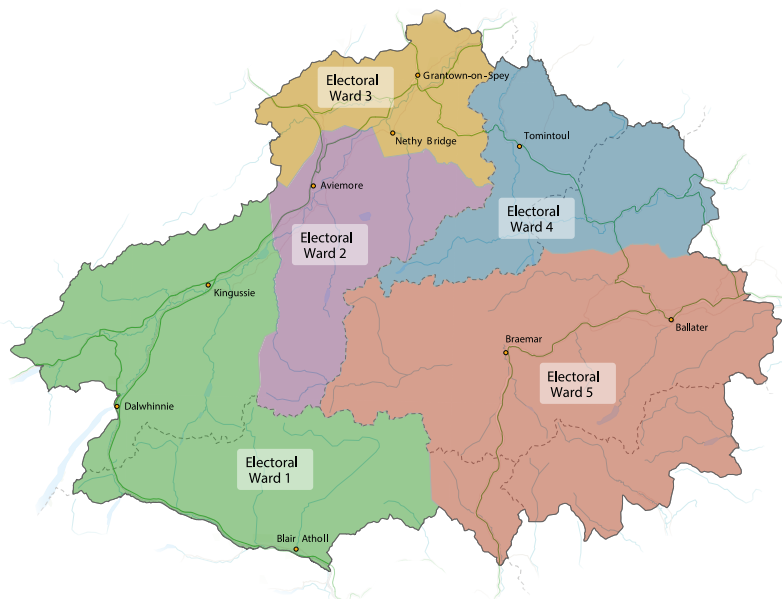
“We’re keen to see candidates from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences come forward for the elections.”

Xander McDade,
Convener

Age need not be a barrier either. When Xander McDade – the current Convener of the board – joined in 2017 he was the youngest ever member at just 23.

“We’re keen to see candidates from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences come forward for the elections,” says Xander. “This is a rewarding and varied role, offering people the chance to make a difference to life in the National Park, working with partners to tackle critical issues that relate to its people, nature and places and ultimately address the climate and nature emergencies.”

The Park Authority board guides and shapes the work of the organisation and the role of a board member is both challenging and rewarding. Board members ensure that both the natural environment and local communities of the National Park are cared for and protected, helping deliver the key priorities set out in our five-year National Park Partnership Plan.



Anne Rae MacDonald has served on the board for the past four years. She adds: “I have found being part of the board to be very rewarding and a great opportunity to work alongside people with a wide variety of backgrounds and skills. The locally-elected members bring a unique perspective to the board, which is key to helping the Park Authority deliver for the communities and businesses within the Park, as well as for the many national and international interests the Park serves.”

We are holding an informal online session on 18 January to give potential candidates an opportunity to ask questions of current board members and Park Authority staff. If you would like more information head to cairngorms.co.uk/elections or call **01479 873 535**.

Informal Q&A
online session

18
January

Submit
paperwork by

15
February

Election day

23
March

Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 is empowering people who live, visit and work in the UK's largest national park to tackle the climate and nature crises.



24 unique projects



Over 45 partners



£12.5m Lottery funding

Dùthchas

[noun, 'tu:xəs/]

The deep-rooted connection between people and nature



Five football pitches of new woodland a week



3,500 ha of peatland restored



Six pilot net zero farming projects



Transforming public transport and active travel routes



Creating the first outdoor centre for people living with dementia



Prescribing nature on the NHS



Developing a wellbeing economy for people and nature



Giving communities power to decide which projects to fund



Connecting people and nature through arts and culture

To find out how you can get involved visit
cairngorms.co.uk/cairngorms2030



In conversation with Gillian Council

Gillian works for Alzheimer Scotland as their Associate Executive Lead for Localities. She lives in Grantown with her husband and their dog Reiff.

What does the Cairngorms mean to you?

The Park really is my playground. Mountains are my favourite place to be and living in Grantown there are lots of opportunities to get out and about. Earlier this year I completed all the munros and we biked the North Coast 500 a few years ago. There's a welcoming community here and that's one of the things I find most special about the place.

Tell us about the Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre

The project is part of the Park Authority's Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme and



Gillian at Badaguish near Aviemore, home of the new Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre

supports local people with dementia. People can be forgotten when they get older and that's not good enough. The centre is the first of its kind in the UK and supports people with dementia, their families and caregivers to have enriching outdoor experiences. Anyone can get in touch with us and get support.

What role can nature and the outdoors play?





If someone has dementia, their brain is working hard to operate and when you add in a noisy house or traffic it can be challenging. Nature is really good for our mental health but there's also something about just being

in the moment, with gentle stimuli such as birdsong, rain and wind. The centre gives people a rediscovered sense of freedom to explore the outdoors at their own pace.

What are your hopes for the future of the project?

I'd like us to show how well this type of activity works in practice and demonstrate that clear referral pathways are in place, working with the NHS. Nature could be 'prescribed' as an alternative to medication in some cases. Ultimately, I hope our project can become a blueprint for other communities to follow.



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Produced by the Cairngorms National Park Authority. For more information, see cairngorms.co.uk/magazine

“The centre is the first of its kind in the UK and supports people with dementia, their families and caregivers to have enriching outdoor experiences. Anyone can get in touch with us and get support.”

Gillian Council,
Alzheimer Scotland

Read the full story on page 11

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**FOREST
CARBON**

