
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

**Title: COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME
2018/19**

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COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

Purpose

To update Board members on the communications & engagement activities carried out during 2017/18 and gain approval for the proposed programme of activity for 2018/19. This programme of work has been guided by the Communications and Brand board group chaired by Brian Wood consisting of Gregor Hutcheon, Paul Easto, Eleanor Mackintosh, Janet Hunter, Angela Douglas and Dave Fallows.

Recommendations

Board Members approve the proposed Communications and Engagement Programme for 2018/19. The final communications & engagement budget will be approved as part of the operational plan and indicative figures for the next year will be set out in the new Corporate Plan for approval in March 2018.

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Strategic Context

- I. Our Corporate Plan 2015-2018 identifies communication with visitors, communities and stakeholders as vital for the work of the CNPA. Our role is to raise the profile of the Park and create a connection and commitment to care for it with identified audiences so they actively support the National Park and benefit from doing so. Our key priorities for action are:

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| Priority 1 | Increase awareness of the Park, what makes it special and the contribution it makes to deliver the Scottish Governments strategic objectives. |
| Priority 2 | Develop a sense of 'closeness' (win hearts and minds) with identified audiences. |
| Priority 3 | Increase the sense of responsibility and ownership to get involved and make a contribution to the Park. |
| Priority 4 | Ensure high quality internal communications that help to deliver the key priorities of the Corporate Plan. |

Summary of Work to Date

2. During 2017/18 our communications and engagement work has focused on three campaigns;
 - i. *'Make it Yours'* to help businesses and residents promote the Park to deliver a better visitor experience and benefit from the Park brand,
 - ii. *Cairngorms Nature* to get visitors and residents to engage with Cairngorms Nature,
 - iii. *Active Cairngorms* to get visitors and residents to be more active in the Park.
3. In addition we have delivered our corporate communications activities; the launch of the National Park Partnership Plan, preparation for the LDP2 & Gaelic Language Plan consultations, digital communications, media relations, stakeholder engagement & events, corporate publications. See Annex I for details of the progress made over the last 3 years.

Monitoring & KPIs

4. A survey with all MSPs was carried out in partnership with Loch Lomond & the Trossachs NPA in Autumn 2016. Results show awareness levels have remained comparable with 2014 figures and those for Loch Lomond & the Trossachs NPA with most MSPs (83%) knowing at least a little about CNP and a third knowing a fair amount or more about it. In terms of favourability there is a drop compared to 2014 results with 43% compared to 54% being favourable but there is a significant increase in those who are very favourable from 7% to 13%. Given there were a large number of new MSPs in 2016, these results show most MSPs are very unlikely to be unfavourable towards either of the National Parks. We have agreed not to carry out an MSP survey in 2017 and to reconsider if this would be useful in 2018.
5. The Business Barometer full year results for 2016/17 show that businesses see that being in the CNP has a positive influence on their business both in terms of attracting first time customers and repeat business. The influence of the Park on business operation and business profitability is still perceived as relatively low but is at a higher rate than the long term average. The recognition of the support of CNPA continues to increase slowly.
6. The next CNPA Visitor Survey will be carried out in 2020. However, VisitScotland carried out a Scotland Visitor Survey between May 2015 and September 2016. A report prepared by Jump Research says: *“Results for the Cairngorms National Park show Visitors were very satisfied with their experience with almost all (97%) giving satisfaction scores of 7 or more out of 10. Just under two-thirds of visitors scored 9 or 10 on the scale, indicating the highest level of satisfaction with their trip. These top 2 scores (9 or 10) show genuine satisfaction and can foster loyalty. The challenge is to continue to improve the visitor experience to encourage more visitors to award the highest scores on the satisfaction scale. Similarly high scores were recorded for likelihood to recommend Cairngorms National Park, with 94% of visitors to the area giving scores of 7-10. 71% scored at the 9 and 10 out of 10 level highlighting a strong propensity to recommend the area to family or friends.”*
7. The National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) consultation resulted in 319 responses and 635 unique users visiting the website. The final plan was launched by the Cabinet Secretary Roseanna Cunningham on 1st June 2017. Work is currently underway for a consultation on the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report to take place in the Autumn/Winter.
8. Since its launch in November 2013 the number of businesses signed up to the Cairngorms National Park Brand Charter is 146 with 167 signed up to the MIY e-bulletin.

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9. Considerable progress has been made to build up our online presence through social media, blogs, e-newsletters and our website with the appointment of our new Digital Campaigns Officer Sian Jamieson. Statistics below are compared to the benchmark set in August 2015 as key indicators over the corporate plan period of 2015-2018:

Measure	2015 Benchmark	1st September 2017	Target 2017/18
Unique Visits	166,190	162,346	180,000
Ave Page Views	2.98	3.14	3
Ave time	2.33	2.21	2.4
Bounce Rate	49.64%	46.48%	50%
Social Media followers	C News: 3,367 C Nature: 4,000 Active C: 550 Total: 7,917	C News: 6,472 CNP FBk & Insta: 593 C Nature: 12,770 Active C: 2,555 Volunteering C: 159 Total: 22,549	C News: 4,200 C Nature: 5,000 Active C: 825 Total: 10,000
SM Engagement	N/A	16.6% - monthly ave	12% - monthly ave
e-bulletins	CNews/Nature: 1,103 Active C: 0 MIY: 0 Total: 1,473	CNews/Nature: 1,372 Active C: 427 MIY: 167 Total: 1,966	CNews/Nature: 1,500 Active C: 500 MIY: 200 Total: 2,200

10. **Recommendation: note progress made to date.**

Proposed Programme for 2018/19

11. With a new National Park Partnership Plan in place and Corporate Plan being developed, the Communications & Brand group agreed the Communications & Engagement Strategy 2012 should be reviewed for Board approval in March 2018. To build on the progress made to date the group agreed to maintain a focus on the main outcomes:
- a) to increase awareness of the Park and role of the Park Authority;
 - b) increase engagement and an emotional connection with the Park;
 - c) increase support and a sense of ownership for the Park;
 - d) ensure high quality internal communications that help to deliver the key priorities of the Corporate Plan.
12. It was also agreed to continue with the three campaigns – Cairngorms Nature, Active Cairngorms, ‘Make it Yours’ with a greater focus on support from the private sector

through visitor giving, volunteering, sponsorship, branded merchandise etc. This is in addition to delivering our Corporate Communication responsibilities.

13. Priority areas of work in 2018/19 will include:

'Make It Yours' Campaign

- a) Activity based on the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Tourism Action Plan
- b) Presentations/support materials (e.g. sponsored 'tear-off' maps)
- c) Collaborative marketing & digital campaigns between CNPA, VisitScotland & CBP
- d) Brand development & active management (including Branded Merchandise)
- e) Interpretation, visitor information and VIC support
- f) Ranger services & volunteer rangers
- g) Explore options for visitor giving

Cairngorms Nature Campaign

- a) Capercaillie HLF Bid phase I communications campaign
- b) CN Big Weekend (LEADER post to create sustainable delivery model by 2020)
- c) CN Seminar
- d) CN Farm Award (presented at the Grantown Show in partnership with NFUS)
- e) CN Young Presenter/Ambassadors initiative
- f) CNP Youth Festival September 2018 (part of Year of Youth 2018)
- g) Promote Volunteer Cairngorms (nature volunteering projects)

Active Cairngorms Campaign

- a) Promote Volunteer Cairngorms & volunteer rangers programme
- b) Promote Health Walks
- c) Wee Walks Week (15-22 September 2018 - tbc)
- d) Europarc Conference – *European Parks: Inspired by the next Generation* (18-21 Sept 2018)
- e) CNP Youth Festival September 2018 (part of Year of Youth 2018)

Corporate Communications

- a) Corporate publications: Corporate Plan 2018, Annual Review, NPPP progress report, Gaelic Language Plan & progress report, Cairngorms Nature Action Plan
- b) Prepare & deliver LDP2 MIR consultation & publish final plan by 2020
- c) Prepare & deliver Gaelic Language Plan2 consultation & final plan by 2018
- d) Build up our digital communications capabilities and activities
- e) Manage, monitor and develop the CNP website
- f) Co-ordinate and monitor our corporate stakeholder & events programme
- g) Promote CNPA's planning services & major projects (A9, HLF bids, LEADER)
- h) Corporate media relations and issues management

- i) Internal communications & delivery of our Organisational Development Strategy

14. Recommendation: approved proposed programme of work for 2018/19.

Resource Implications

- 15. The Communications & Engagement programme of work is delivered by staff across the organisation, co-ordinated and supported by the Communications & Engagement team. The current Corporate Plan has allocated associated budgets which account for 7% of our total operational plan and staff costs. The 2018/19 budget will be approved as part of the operational plan in March 2018 and in support of the new Corporate Plan 2018.

Success Measures

- 16. The new Corporate Plan will identify key performance indicators (KPIs) such as:
 - i. **Increased awareness of the Park** – visitor survey (2019/20), digital campaign reach & engagement statistics
 - ii. **Increased engagement with the Park** – Brand Charter holders, communication campaigns’ participants/feedback, consultation responses, forum members
 - iii. **Increase support for the Park** – volunteers & volunteer rangers, visitor giving, sponsorships & donations (including % donated via Branded Merchandise)
 - iv. **Increased awareness of CNPA role** –MSP Survey (2018), Business Barometer (Qtly), Visitor Survey (2020), website statistics, SM statistics (Twitter & Facebook)
 - v. **Staff motivated & committed** – staff survey (2018)

Next Steps

- 17. It is proposed that the Communications & Brand Group continues to provide Board support and advice for this area of work. The Board will be updated on progress through the CEO quarterly reports, the Corporate Plan reporting processes and an annual update along with details of the proposed annual programme to be presented at the Autumn Board meeting. A revised Communications & Engagement Strategy 2018-2022 will be prepared in support of the new National Park Partnership Plan and Corporate Plan for Board approval in March 2018.

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