

## Managing for Visitors Plan 2023

### Background and Strategic Context

1. The summers of 2020 and 2021 were unprecedented in terms of the changes that were seen in visitor distribution and behaviour in the Park. A combination of circumstances, including the easing of lockdown policies and the desire of visitors to experience the outdoors and nature, put significant new pressures on certain locations in the Park.
2. New arrangements for managing for visitors were put in place with partners during this time. These arrangements were comprehensively reviewed by the CNPA Board in December 2021 – papers are available at <https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-together/meetings/meeting/board-2021-11-26/> . These arrangements were continued for 2022.
3. Looking forwards, the CNPA is committed to working with partners as part of the national visitor management framework to deliver high-quality visitor experiences within the Park. In late 2021 the CNPA consulted on the National Park Partnership Plan (2023-2028). The consultation prompted a record level of public response and feedback. NPP4 includes several objectives relating to visitor management in Table I below.

**Table I - NPP4 Priorities**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Relevant Actions</b>	<b>NPP4 Policy</b>
A7- Fire Management	Ensure that all managed burning follows best practice as defined by muirburn licensing scheme, supporting habitat restoration and recovery	Reduce wildfire risk by developing an integrated wildfire management plan for the National Park	Develop and agree a National Park approach on campfires and barbecues	C4- Reducing fire risk by limiting or excluding barbecues and open fires in key areas of the National Park such as in areas of woodland and peatland
A13- Species Recovery	Ensure species thrive in the National Park	Species recovery	Deliver a work programme to support capercaillie	A6- Minimising disturbance to

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	with key assemblages across the Cairngorms within semi-natural landscape		conservation in the Cairngorms, based on best available evidence	sensitive species in particular locations at certain times of the year. B3- Identifying areas where particular management measures are needed in relation to delivering a high quality visitor experience, whilst safeguarding sensitive species and environments. B3- Promoting responsible behaviour in enjoying and managing access.
B10- A Park for All	There will be better opportunities for everyone to enjoy the National Park and the visitor profile will be more diverse, especially with regards to people who are disabled, LGBTQ+ and from minority	Visitors to the National Park will more closely resemble the overall demography of Scotland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Active Cairngorms</li> </ul>	B3- Identifying areas where particular management measures are needed in relation to delivering a high quality visitor experience, whilst safeguarding sensitive

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<b>Theme</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Relevant Actions</b>	<b>NPP4 Policy</b>
	and ethnic groups			species and environments.
C8- Accessible path and cycle network	Improve path, cycle and outdoor access networks to give outstanding opportunities to experience the natural and cultural heritage of the National park to the widest range people, while minimising disturbance to vulnerable species, habitats and sites.	Increase the number of kilometres of safe and inclusive off road or segregated on-road routes between communities by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Active Cairngorms:</li> <li>• Complete extension of Deeside Way to Braemar:</li> <li>• Increase promotion of Speyside Way and provide options for cycling</li> <li>• Consider all potential mechanisms to recue disturbance on key species and recreational impacts on high ground.</li> </ul>	B3- Identifying areas where particular management measures are needed in relation to delivering a high quality visitor experience, whilst safeguarding sensitive species and environments.
C9- High quality visitor experience	Welcome visitors and provide a high quality experience while managing their impacts through providing better infrastructure and high quality ranger services	<p>Number of public toilets within the National Park maintained</p> <p>Increased public toilet facilities for people with a additional needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement Active Cairngorms Action Plan:</li> <li>• Support the implementation of the Cairngorm Masterplan</li> </ul>	B3- Identifying areas where particular management measures are needed in relation to delivering a high quality visitor experience, whilst safeguarding sensitive species and environments. B5- Addressing any

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<b>Theme</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Relevant Actions</b>	<b>NPP4 Policy</b>
				barriers to participation B5- Ensuring that the infrastructure of the National Park is designed and maintained to be as access as possible to people with the widest range of abilities. C4- Ensuring high-quality facilities and infrastructure are designed to manage effects of visitor pressures on the natural heritage and communities C4- Reducing impacts on sensitive habitats.

4. Further work will be undertaken on a number of action plans including the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan, Strategic Infrastructure Plan and Active Cairngorms (covering outdoor access, recreation , health, volunteering and the management for visitors).
5. It is anticipated the Managing for Visitors Plan will be embedded in the Active Cairngorms Action Plan, due to be revised and published by the end of 2023. In the meantime this plan is in place for the 2023 season.

## Objectives

6. The objectives for the Managing for Visitors Plan 2023 are to:
  - Provide a warm welcome and support exceptional experiences for the public to enjoy the outdoors
  - Mitigate any negative impacts from increased recreation in sensitive or popular sites
  - Reduce potential conflict between residents and visitors
  - Secure the confidence of the Park's communities that the Park's special qualities are being well- managed and cared for
  - Promote collaboration across estate and organisational boundaries ensuring a positive visitor experience.

## Key Partners

7. Collaboration with partners is key to the successful delivery of these objectives. At a regional level the key partners to CNPA are:
  - Local Authorities
  - Cairngorms Business Partnership
  - Partner Ranger Services
  - Land Managers
  - Owners/managers of key visitor sites
  - NatureScot
  - Police Scotland
  - Scottish Fire and Rescue
  - Volunteers and Volunteer Rangers
8. The work with all partners will be facilitated by advice from the following partnership/advisory groups:
  - Managing for Visitors Group – meeting every two weeks from Easter to October and monthly in winter to provide operational guidance, networking and support to staff undertaking on-the-ground activity
  - Cairngorms Tourism Partnership (CTP) – meeting roughly quarterly to focus on review of Tourism Action Plan
  - Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum – meeting roughly quarterly to advise on management of outdoor access issues.

## Focus

9. The Cairngorms National Park is the largest National Park in the UK and much of it is remote, mountainous and relatively inaccessible. The vast majority of

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

visitors behave very responsibly and the management issues caused are generally localised and the locations predictable. It is unrealistic and unnecessary to implement all management measures equally across the Park, given staffing and resources. However, it is essential to implement confidently and consistently the clear, simple messaging about the importance of safe, responsible and enjoyable behaviour in the Park.

10. The focus of managing for visitors measures will be on the proactive, safe management of key countryside sites simplified into two broad areas:

- Rural “hot spots”
- Rural “warm spots”

These are identified in Table 2. A risk rating for each site identified is given as follows:

	Very popular, pinch points on trails, could be on a dead end road, limited parking and overspill sites, popular hills or beauty spots, bridges, heavily promoted by 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties, close to main transport routes i.e. trunk roads and accessible from large towns.
	Popular, parking previously sufficient for level of use, setting off point for hills or beauty spots and promoted by 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties, likely to experience overspill from nearby popular sites.

**Table 2- Rural “Hotspots” and “Warm Spots”**

Key Countryside Location	Risk	Manager	Roads Authority	On-site support (including estimated FTE coverage)
Muir of Dinnet		NatureScot	Aberdeenshire	SNH Site Manager and Aberdeenshire Ranger
Dinnet Bridge		Dinnet Estate	Aberdeenshire	CNPA Ranger Service
Cambus o May		FLS	Aberdeenshire	FLS Ranger (0.1)
Cambus o May Bridge		Aberdeenshire Council, Dinnet Estate and Inchmarnoch Estate	Aberdeenshire	CNPA Ranger Service

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

Glen Tanar		Glen Tanar Estate/ Charitable Trust	Aberdeenshire	GTCT Ranger Service (1.4)
Loch Muick		Balmoral Estate	Aberdeenshire	Balmoral Ranger Service (2)
Keiloch Car Park		Invercauld Estate	Aberdeenshire	Invercauld Estate Ranger
Linn of Dee		NTS	Aberdeenshire	NTS Ranger Service (2)
Glen Clova/ Glen Doll		FLS / Angus Alive/NatureScot	Angus	AA Ranger Service (2)
Glen Mark		Angus Council and Dalhousie Estates	Angus	CNPA Seasonal Ranger
Killiecrankie		NTS	Perth and Kinross	NTS Ranger
Beinn a Ghlo (car park)		Lude Estate	Perth & Kinross	No ranger service
Falls of Bruar		Atholl Estate and House of Bruar	Perth and Kinross	Atholl Estates
Glen Feshie (car park)		Achlean Croft	Highland Council	Land manager supported by CNPA Ranger Service
Uath Lochans		FLS	Highland Council	FLS Ranger (0.1)
Feshie Bridge		FLS	Highland Council	FLS Ranger (0.1)
Laggan Wolftrax		FLS and Laggan Forest Trust	Highland Council	FLS Ranger (0.1) and LFT staff
Loch an Eilien		Rothiemurchus	Highland Council	Rothiemurchus Estate Ranger Service (2)
Glenmore		FLS	Highland Council	FLS Ranger Service (2)
Cairngorm Mountain		HIE	Highland Council	CM Ranger Service (2)
Loch Vaa		Seafield Estate	Highland Council	Land managers supported by CNPA Ranger Service

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

Loch Pityoulish		Pityoulish	Pityoulish Estate	CNPA Ranger Service
Loch Garten		RSPB Scotland	Highland Council	RSPB Community Ranger and estate staff (0.3)
Grantown – River Spey beach area and cemetery		Highland Council and Seafield Estate	Highland Council	Land managers supported by CNPA Ranger Service
Glenlivet Estate		Crown Estate Scotland	Moray Council	CES Ranger (0.5)
Glenshee/ Snow Roads Scenic Route south of Braemar		Various	Aberdeenshire/ Perth and Kinross Council	Land managers supported by CNPA Ranger Service

**Managing for Visitors Measures**

11. Successful management for visitors is based on good communication between partners, suitable infrastructure, continued public engagement and risk management. All of these elements are under-pinned and guided by continued monitoring and evaluation.
12. Table 3 sets out the priority actions to be taken forward across the Park in 2023.

***Table 3 – Priorities for Managing for Visitors in 2023***

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated messaging by Managing for Visitors and</li> <li>• Collaboration on #CairngormsTogether and TreadLightly campaign with CBP and others</li> <li>• Deployment and updating of variable message electronic signs at key location</li> <li>• Deliver national comms campaigns at regional level</li> <li>• New commissioned campaign focussing on (i.) responsible dog walking, (ii.) wildfires, (iii.) parking, (iv.) visitors underestimating risks eg having the wrong kit, (v.) wild swimming and water safety, (vi.) litter and outdoor toileting, (vii.) wild camping, and (viii.) the cumulative impacts of visitor activity.</li> </ul>
Wild Fire Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update guidance on open fires and barbecues</li> <li>• Produce a responsible outdoor cooking leaflet</li> </ul>



**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

Managing informal camping pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discourage inappropriate camping</li> <li>• Promote formal campsites</li> <li>• Pilot habitat recovery measures at key locations</li> <li>• Deliver targeted Duke of Edinburgh Award expedition messaging</li> <li>• Ranger patrols at key camping hotspots.</li> </ul>
Parking management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage responsible parking</li> <li>• Encourage alternative ways of accessing sites</li> </ul>
Visitor Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin implementation of projects identified in Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan</li> <li>• Visitor Infrastructure Improvement Programme grants administered by CNPA</li> </ul>
Public toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of public toilet provision</li> </ul>
Promoted paths and popular mountain paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community path networks will be well sign posted</li> <li>• Promoted paths on key hotspots will be maintained to a high standard</li> <li>• Refreshed approach to path and sign condition monitoring using digital technology</li> </ul>
Ranger patrols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranger Patrols at key sensitive times</li> <li>• Communication across Ranger family using whats app</li> <li>• Pop up events targeting key messages i.e. responsible toileting</li> </ul>
Land management support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of sign templates and guidance to provide consistent messaging</li> </ul>
Statutory measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management agreements and guidelines at key visitor hotspots and sensitive sites</li> </ul>
Enhanced Police Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced police presence to be deployed in Glenmore during school summer holidays (FLS, CNPA and THC)</li> </ul>
Litter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cairngorms Litter Network to promote community- led volunteering in partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful</li> <li>• Ranger patrols to support land-managers and communities at key sites</li> </ul>

**Ranger Service priorities**

13. The Partnership Framework for Ranger Services in the Park sets out the vision for Ranger Services:

*A high-profile network of Cairngorms' rangers connecting people with an outstanding National Park. They work collaboratively to provide an innovative, inspirational and*

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

*professional service. They are committed to enhancing public enjoyment, understanding and care of the outdoors, focused on maintaining the quality and relevance of their work and recognised, valued and supported by their employers, other related professions and the public.*

14. In the context of the managing for visitors, Ranger Services will focus on positive face-to-face engagement with visitors at key hotspots by delivering the following aims:
- To ensure a warm welcome and provide support to help people enjoy the outdoors;
  - To increase awareness, understanding, care and responsible use of the natural and cultural heritage; and
  - To support the sustainable management and use of the outdoors to meet a range of social, economic and environmental objectives.
15. CNPA will continue to develop the family of ranger services across the Park through providing grant-aid, promoting training and development opportunities, advising on ranger roles, and a strong visual identity and branding. Table 4 sets out current Ranger Service coverage in the Park. \* indicates ranger service financially supported by CNPA in 2022.

**Table 4- Ranger Service Coverage**

<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Atholl Estate*	2
Balmoral Estate*	2.6
Glen Tanar Charitable Trust*	1.6
Rothiemurchus Estate*	2
RSPB Community Ranger Abernethy *	1
Muir of Dinnet National Nature Reserve	1.5
Glenlivet Estate	1
FLS Glenmore-& Strathspey - one permanent, 2 seasonal for 2023	2
NTS Mar Lodge	2
Angus Alive – Glen Doll*	2
Cairngorm Mountain	1.5
Cairngorms Connect	1
Highlife Highland	1
Dorenell (cross boundary)	0.2
Aberdeenshire Council	0.5
Cairngorms National Park Authority Rangers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Badenoch and Strathspey – 2 permanent rangers, 6 seasonal rangers</li> <li>• Deeside – 2 permanent rangers, 3 seasonal rangers</li> </ul>	4 full time, 9 seasonal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angus Glens based in Glen Esk, 1 seasonal ranger</li> <li>• Plans for 2 trainee Rangers from June, one in either team</li> </ul>	
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16. Lucy Ford, Ranger Manager in CNPA is the key operational contact for the CNPA Rangers, and the coordination of all ranger resources in the Park. Contact CNPA Ranger team at [rangers@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:rangers@cairngorms.co.uk)

**Communication Planning**

17. We will continue with the successful #CairngormsTogether campaign which was developed with the Cairngorms Business Partnership in 2020 to promote common messaging in support of visitors, communities and local businesses. Detailed communications will be agreed through the Managing for Visitors and but collectively will be:-

- Positive – sharing and ‘celebrating’ what people can responsibly do in outdoors
- Consistent – we all need to say the same thing
- Concise – get our most important positive, consistent messages across in a few words.

18. Where practicable variable message signs will be deployed to provide “real time” information on the status of car parks in the vicinity of the sign. Table 5 sets out the current location of the VMS signs and the relevant managing body. Further information will be added to CNPA website so that all parties are clear about roles and responsibilities for updated in each sign.

**Table 5 – Variable Message Signs**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>
Coylumbridge	CairnGorm Mountain
Minor Rd to Glenmore (Sled Dog turn off)	Forestry and Land Scotland
A97 A944 junction heading west	Aberdeenshire Council Roads
Dinnet A93 west of X roads	Aberdeenshire Council Roads
B976 Minor County Rd Junction to Loch Muick	Aberdeenshire Council Roads /Balmoral Estate

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

19. A large percentage of visitors continue to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. Therefore monitoring of visitor behaviour at key hotspots will be used to guide resources and the deployment of staff.
20. In support of ongoing monitoring key visitor pressure periods will be agreed by the Managing for Visitors Group and will include:
  - The “Glasgow Fair” holiday period and the following 2 weekends
  - School holiday dates
  - Notable “events”
21. To help guide future activity, 2023 monitoring of traffic levels and patterns in the Glenmore corridor will be undertaken via a series of traffic cameras installed by the Highland Council.
22. A new monitoring framework and form was developed for 2022 in conjunction with NatureScot to allow consistent reporting of the work of Ranger Services across Scotland – see **Annex I**. Data gathered through the revised form will feed into the national monitoring requirements of the new national Visitor Management Strategy Coordination Group.
23. There will be a post-season evaluation exercise undertaken in October 2023. The key findings will be used to develop the Active Cairngorms Action Plan.

**Cairngorms National Park Authority**  
**Plan updated: February 2023**

## **Annex I - Monitoring framework for visitor management issues**

### **Introduction**

1. The arrangements for collection and management of key information have been reviewed by CNPA Ranger Manager, Lucy Ford, in discussion with partner Ranger Services. This short paper sets out the key information requirements to enable all active partners in visitor management to make realistic resource decisions and to support the development of further plans.

### **Short Term – April to October**

2. To gather intelligence and identify risks that will need addressing with short term management interventions at an area and Park-wide level the following minimum data must be gathered and shared weekly:
  - a) Number of tents at a given site
  - b) Number of open fires and barbecues at a given site
  - c) Number of camper vans staying over night
  - d) Number of serious irresponsible access incidents.
3. Annex 2 sets out the feedback form for the short term monitoring period.
4. This data will be gathered by each site-based ranger service on a weekly basis and collated by the CNPA for the Managing for Visitors Group. Additional information on camp sites, fires and irresponsible access outwith of site based ranger services will be gathered by CNPA seasonal ranger staff.

### **Medium Term**

5. In order to ascertain what worked well and what didn't and what interventions will need to be taken forward to implement a deliverable visitor management process across key hot spots in the Park a review will be prepared to include the following:
  - e) Summary of camping trends over key period
  - f) Summary of fires trend over key period:
  - g) Data on number of visitors and key trends in relation to peak periods
  - h) Parking and traffic data gathered by partners
  - i) Trends in irresponsible behaviour
  - j) Summary and reflections on interventions:
  - k) Summary and reflections on communications.

**Annex 2**

2022 CNP Visitor Management Form

Visitor monitoring form for all sites across the Cairngorms National Park. This form is to be filled in throughout the season with fortnightly reports presented to the managing for visitors group.

**\*Required**

I. Select Area \*

- Deeside
- Badenoch & Strathspey
- Blair Atholl
- Tomintoul & Glenlivet
- Angus Glens
- Aviemore
- Boat of Garten
- Carr-Bridge
- Cromdale
- Dalwhinnie
- Dulnain Bridge
- Glenmore
- Grantown
- Inshriach
- Kingussie
- Kincaig/Loch Insh
- Loch Pityoulish
- Laggan
- Loch Garten
- Nethy Bridge
- Newtonmore
- Rothiemurchus
- Blair Atholl

2/2/22, 10:36 AM

2022 CNP Visitor Management Data

- Tomintoul & Glenlivet
- Aboyne
- Ballater
- Braemar
- Cambus o'May
- Glen Tanar
- Glen Shee
- Linn of Dee/Quoich
- Muir of Dinnet
- Strathdon
- Glen Lee
- Glen Mark
- Glen Esk
- Glen Doll

3. Date or period data collected \*
4. Number of people engaged with \*
5. Number of tents encountered in patrol area \*
6. Number of overnighting campervans encountered in patrol area \*
7. Number of dogs on a lead (or under very close control) encountered \*
8. Number of dogs off the lead (or not under very close control) encountered \*
9. Number of live fires/BBQs extinguished \*
10. Number of old fire/BBQ remains cleared \*
11. Number of black bin bags of litter collected (units of .25) \*
12. Incident report required? \*      Yes / No