
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

- Title:** *Design Guidance for Community Path Leaflets*
- Prepared by:** *Pete Crane, Senior Visitor Services Officer*
- Purpose:** **To update the Forum on development of a consistent approach to the design of community path leaflets that help us deliver the National Park Plan outcome, “a wider range of people will have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.”**
- Advice sought:** The Forum is invited to give its advice on the following:-

- **Will the Draft Design Guidance for Community Path Leaflets in Annex I produce leaflets that encourage ‘a wider range of people to have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors’,**
- **Are the LOAF happy to endorse the guidance?**

Background

1. Scottish Government Guidance on promoting core paths states; *‘Core paths will only be successful if people are using them....Clear signposting and way marking will be required as well as information on core paths through appropriate media such as leaflets, map boards and websites. People need to:*
 - *Be aware of the benefits of paths;*
 - *Know where they are; and*
 - *Be encouraged to use them.*

Partnerships should be developed to maximise the use of core paths.’
2. We also know that walking and specifically short walks are the most popular activity undertaken by visitors: *‘48% of respondents who said they will undertake some form of walking,’* 2003/4 visitor survey.
3. The LOAF has previously endorsed the use of consistent path sign posting and way marking in the National Park so the next area of path promotion we are aiming to improve is leaflets.
4. There are many community path leaflets produced within the National Park to meet the demand from visitors and promote core paths but:-
 - many are old and do not meet current best practice in making the information accessible to all;
 - many of the maps used are complex and difficult to understand;
 - few leaflets reflect core path planning;
 - few leaflets reflect changes in access legislation;
 - there is no consistent approach to presenting information; and
 - few of the leaflets make the most of their location in the National Park or promote neighbouring communities.
5. Community path leaflets tend to be produced locally and focus on the routes in and around a settlement. They are non-commercial productions mainly funded by grants. They are either free or for sale at a nominal cost (usually no more than £1.00) with funds used to

cover the cost of reprints. These leaflets do not appear to conflict with commercial productions which tend to cover larger areas and ‘cherry pick’ one or two routes in or close to a settlement.

6. We believe that community path leaflets produced using consistent design guidance will allow us to more effectively promote paths and also help us deliver the National Park Plan outcome, “*a wider range of people will have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.*”
7. Bowles Green, a consultancy working in the tourism and conservation sector, has recently completed a ‘Countryside Mapping Scoping Study’ which looks at practitioners’ views and research data. The research indicates that people use a variety of strategies to find their way and suggests that it is good practice is to supply information in a variety of forms:-
 - maps (simple flat maps linked to way marks);
 - way marks on the ground; and
 - written route descriptions.

Work to Date

8. We have been working with David Warnock and Stirling Surveys (experienced cartographers and leaflet designers) in developing design guidance.
9. The initial work undertaken was:-
 - Two workshops with community path groups across the National Park on the attributes of a ‘good’ path leaflet;
 - Consultation with Inclusive Cairngorms;
 - Discussion with RNIB over specific legibility issues; and
 - Review of existing leaflets and research data.
10. This work lead to the development of a set of guiding principles:-
 - a. Community Path Leaflets are principally designed to encourage people to use **way marked routes** in and around a settlements – such routes are usually no more than 5 miles long and the most common users are ‘walkers’ for recreation.
 - b. Path leaflets should meet best practice guidance in terms of font size, legibility and contrast. They should be in plain English and easy to read. Paper should not be reflective high gloss.
 - c. Path leaflets should use large, simplified plan maps with the minimum amount of information for a user to safely and enjoyably find their way round a route. Colour and symbols should be used in a standard way e.g.
 - Blue for water
 - Green for woodland
 - Car Park 
 - d. Wherever possible the coloured way marks or symbols used on the ground to show a path should match coloured routes or symbols on the map.
 - e. Contours should only be used where they are absolutely necessary to show relief.

- f. Maps should also show core paths and other paths that are not way marked where these can easily be used by people confident enough to stray from way marked routes.
- g. Route distances should be described in miles to be consistent with path sign guidance. Adding a range of approximate times may be useful for some users.
- h. Route descriptions should be clear, concise and provide an accurate 'picture' of the path condition, e.g.' low level forest paths, some parts can be muddy after wet weather, two kissing gates'.
- i. Leaflets should contain clear messages on responsible access.

11. Following this, a second stage of work started developing three demonstration leaflets:-

- Paths around Nethy Bridge in partnership with Explore Abernethy
- Paths around Ballater in partnership with COAT
- Paths around Kingussie in partnership with Kingussie Path Group and COAT

12. These leaflets are now nearing completion and the lessons learnt during this process have shaped the draft guidance in Annex1. This guidance follows national best practice in presentation of text, images and maps. It also aims to produce a consistent template that will allow the development of a recognisable family of 'Cairngorms Community Path Leaflets' while still allowing each community to promote its identity within the National Park.

13. If the Design Guidance for Community Path Leaflets is endorsed by the LOAF and signed off by the CNPA Management Team we will make its use a condition of funding support for new leaflets.

Further Work

14. During the early work on developing an Implementation Plan for Core Paths we have identified that there is potential for some 14 -15 community path leaflets to be re-designed or produced from new. We anticipate, with willing partners, that most of these could be produced to the new guidelines within the next three years.

15. The maps produced for the leaflets can easily be reproduced as map boards for display in communities or at trail heads. The maps can also be down loaded from the web. We will encourage both these uses as part of the ongoing work.

16. Inclusive Cairngorms identified a need to produce information on 'barrier free routes' over a wider area than just a community and COAT are currently producing such a leaflet for Deeside. A similar leaflet for Badenoch and Strathspey is planned for 2010/11.

17. A number of land managers produce commercial/semi-commercial path leaflets covering their area e.g. Forestry Commission Scotland, Crown Estate and Rothiemurchus Estate. If endorsed we will promote the use of the principles (particularly simplicity, consistency and clarity) contained in the guidance with these organisations, and make this a condition where grant aid is provided.

18. We consider that a suite of Community Path Leaflets alongside path leaflets produced by land managers, and commercial publications will provide excellent coverage of low ground paths throughout the National Park. However, these publications will not meet the needs of cyclists, horse riders and long distance walkers where the distance travelled each day is

much larger. Before embarking on work to meet the needs of these user groups' further discussions is required with both users and the business community. We will return to the LOAF for advise on this matter at a later date.

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