

CAIRNGORMS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ADVISORY FORUM

DRAFT NOTE

Date: 13th June 2013
Time: 10.30
Venue: Darroch Learg Hotel, Ballater

Present

1	Bill Lobban	Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Board (Chair)
2	Drennan Watson	Scottish Environment Link
3	Kate Howie	CNPA Board
4	Sally Dowden	CBP
5	Keith Legge	CBP
6	Louise Mackie	Aberdeenshire Council
7	Nick Mardall	Deeside / Donside Development Officer
8	Cattie Anderson	SNH
9	Kevin Roach	CBP
10	Rita Marks	Association of Cairngorms Communities
11	Richard Pinn	VisitScotland
12	Ben Thorburn	CBP
13	Colin Simpson	Highland Council
14	Keith Legge	Scottish Youth Hostel Association

In attendance

1	Francoise van Buuren	CNPA
2	Pete Crane	CNPA
3	Heather Trench	CNPA
4	Sandra Middleton	CNPA
5	Claire Bruce	Deeside DMO

Apologies

1	Jeremy Roberts	Scottish Environment Link
2	Jamie Williamson	Alvie Estate

Welcome & Introductions

1. BL welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introductions were made.

Apologies

2. As noted above.

Minutes of the Last Meeting & Matters Arising

3. The minutes were accepted as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

4. API – PC has the training summary and will circulate it.
AP2 – No progress has been made since the last meeting.
AP3 – Complete.

Deeside DMO and Tourism Forum

5. Claire Bruce led an informal discussion about the history and work of the Royal Deeside & Cairngorms DMO. It was founded in 2007 with support from Scottish Enterprise and covers a large area of Deeside from Glenshee & Braemar to as far East as Crathes and Drum Castle. It currently employs 3 people making up just over 1 full-time equivalent post and has 8 directors drawn from local businesses. They currently have 80 – 100 members and organise a range of events every year including board meetings, business events open to all, and a new Deeside Tourism Forum which brings businesses together with public bodies and community groups.
6. There was a discussion about the most appropriate geographical basis for marketing the area. It was acknowledged that the different areas of the Park have different target markets, but that for many visitors, especially those from overseas, the words 'national park' have a lot of value, and the Cairngorms is increasingly being seen as a destination. CB explained that the Deeside DMO will work with the Cairngorms Business Partnership where appropriate, for example around an upcoming food festival. As funding opportunities grow scarcer, such collaborative working will become increasingly important.

Encouraging Greater Use of the CNP Brand Identity

7. PC introduced Paper 1 and explained that any major changes to the design or use of the brand lay with the CNPA Board with key advice from the Brand Development group. In discussion, the following points were made:
 - Declining business uptake of the brand is due to perception that it is owned by the CNPA and other public bodies, rather than communities and businesses.
 - Not enough is being done to communicate the brand values that could bring the brand identity to life despite the initial development of a brand wheel which later informed the CBP's Marketing Framework.
 - Any change to the criteria will erode the brand values and undermine the marketing advantage for those using it.
 - There is work to be done to convince businesses of the 'business benefits' of the brand and this should be taken forward by the 'Make it yours' programme of work. The best way to sell the benefits would be to have business champions.
 - The criteria may not be the reason that uptake has slowed. The Inverness City brand is free for all to use and has shown a similar uptake pattern.
 - There is nothing to stop businesses who don't meet the criteria to promote themselves as being here by simply using the words 'in the Cairngorms National Park'.

- The role of quality assurance has changed since the criteria were initially set. QA schemes are less relevant in the era of Trip Advisor and social media.

Year of Homecoming

8. Francoise van Buuren introduced the paper. The forum generally felt that there was little point in developing one flagship event to celebrate Homecoming within the Park, especially given the short timescale. Rather, Homecoming could be a theme that is incorporated into existing events. For example, all the Highland Games throughout the Park could be jointly marketed.
9. There was a discussion about the opportunities presented by next summer's big events – the Commonwealth games and the Ryder Cup. Hilary Tasker advised that the Commonwealth shooting competition will be held in Angus but her research shows that those attending will generally not do much travelling afterwards. However promotion of the games is likely to have a longer term influence on the propensity to visit the country. Kate Howie felt that Ryder Cup visitors presented more of an opportunity, with accommodation in Perthshire filling rapidly.

Economic Diversification Strategy

10. Sandra Middleton gave a short presentation about the background to the strategy, development to date and the future process. In terms of tourism, a cluster analysis will show areas for potential economic expansion, and members of the forum will be invited to a workshop to discuss this.

Sustainable Tourism Strategy Mid-term Review

11. Heather Trench explained that the midpoint of the current Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2011-2016 falls in autumn 2013. Last time, a mid-term review proved useful in assessing progress and allowing us to reconsider our priorities. The forum felt that this would again be a useful process and it was suggested that an external consultant should be engaged again. It was agreed that the next forum meeting would be replaced by a slightly wider workshop and that this would tie in with the Economic Diversification Strategy if at all possible.

AOB

Local Development Plan: Glenmore Boundary.

12. Drennan Watson introduced paper 3 and expressed concern that including a settlement boundary for Glenmore would open the door to development around the shore of Loch Morlich. Pete Crane explained the rationale for inclusion of Glenmore as a settlement, which is specifically to allow. The accompanying text makes it clear that visitor experience and conservation are the priorities for the area. The Local Development Plan is currently open for consultation and members are encouraged to respond.

VisitScotland Growth Fund 2013/14

13. Alan Rankin had asked in advance to raise a concern that the VisitScotland Growth Fund for 2013 /14 was already fully committed. CBP did not get an application for funding submitted in time and face a shortfall in their planned marketing spend for the year. Richard Pinn confirmed that was the case and explained that the 2014/15 fund is open for applications already. He urged anyone interested in the funding to ensure that applications were submitted as soon as possible.

Date of Next Meeting

14. The next meeting will be a wider workshop around the mid-term review of the strategy.

AP 1: HT to circulate potential dates for the workshop

**Heather Trench
Sustainable Tourism Officer
CNPA**