
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING **held in the Blair Castle, Blair Atholl** **on Friday 16 March 2018 at 10.45am**

PRESENT

Peter Argyle (Convener)
Rebecca Badger
Geva Blackett
Carolyn Caddick
Angela Douglas
Dave Fallows
Pippa Hadley
Janet Hunter
Gregor Hutcheon

John Latham
Eleanor Mackintosh
Xander McDade
Ian McLaren
Willie McKenna
Judith Webb
Walter Wilson
Brian Wood (Deputy Convener)

In Attendance:

Grant Moir, Chief Executive,
Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning & Rural Development,
David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services,
Pete Mayhew, Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience,
Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services,
Alix Harkness, Clerk to the Board.

Apologies: Gordon Riddler

Welcome and Introduction

1. Peter Argyle, the Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting in Blair Atholl.
2. The Convener said that positive and useful discussions with the Highland and Island's Enterprise Chairman, Lorne Crerar and Chief Executive, Charlotte Wright had taken place the evening before.

3. The Convener asked for volunteers to come forward to attend the forthcoming Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP) Summer Conference at Mar Lodge. Geva Blackett and Rebecca Badger volunteered to attend.
4. The Convener reported that there was to be Parliamentary Reception hosted by EnvironmentLINK from 6-8pm on 17th April 2018 focussing on youth and youth engagement. He suggested that Board Members check their diaries and advise him after the meeting if any members could volunteer to attend and represent the Board. Dave Fallows and Pippa Hadley expressed an interest in volunteering to attend this event.
5. Apologies were noted.
6. **Actions:**
 - i. **Geva Blackett and Rebecca Badger to attend the CBP Summer Conference. Clerk to the Board to book them tickets for the conference.**
 - ii. **Board Members interested in representing the Board at the Parliamentary Reception on 17th April 2018 to let the Convener know after the meeting.**

Minutes of Last Meetings held on 15 December 2017 and 26 January 2018 – for approval

7. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 15 December 2017 were agreed with no amendments.
8. The draft Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 January 2018 were agreed with no amendments.

Matters Arising

9. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the minutes of the meeting on 15 December 2017:
 - Action Point at Para 5 (i.) – Closed – Discussion & Dinner with Lorne Crerar and Charlotte Wright had been rescheduled and had taken place the night before.
 - Action Point at Para 24 (i.) – Closed – Katie Crerar had been congratulated on behalf of the Board.
 - Action Point at Para 24 (ii.) – Outstanding – Board Member(s) to pass on details

and locations of sections of the Speyside Way that have fallen into despair to Pete Crane.

- Action Points at Para 33 (i-iii.) – Closed – Changes made to the Strategic Risk Register.
- Action Point at Para 41 (i.) – Closed – Janet Hunter and Geva Blackett volunteered to join the Cairngorms Tourism Partnership.
- Action Point at Para 41 (ii.) – Closed – Walter Wilson volunteered to attend the Scottish Tourism Month: Signature Conference in Glasgow rescheduled to take place on 24th April 2018. Geva Blackett would also be attending.
- Action Point at Para 50 (i-ii.) – Closed – All actions relating to the National Parks UK proposal to establish a National Charity paper were carried out. Grant Moir provided some feedback from the last meeting where NPUK abolished itself and were now back to being a partnership as opposed to a company limited by guarantee. He added that each National Park will be expected to take a turn in hosting and chairing future meetings.
- Action Point at Para 7 (bullet point 3) - In hand – The Board Informal session and visit to the East Cairngorm Moorland Partnership will take place after the new Board Members are appointed.
- Action Point at Para 7 (bullet point 2) – In hand – Board Business discussion on New Mountain Hare Guidance will be scheduled.
- Action Point at Para 7 (bullet point 4) – On hold – Deer movement concerns from SNH not yet received.

10. The Convener provided an update on the Action points from the minutes of the meeting on 26 January 2018:

- Action Point at Para 6 (i.) – In hand – Walter Wilson and Geva Blackett will attend the Scottish Tourism Alliance Conference on 24th April 2018.
- Action Point at Para 13 (i-iii.) – Closed – All updates and amendments to the Cairngorms Forestry Strategy Consultation document were made prior to the consultation going live.

11. **Actions:** **None.**

Declarations of Interest

12. No interests declared.

CEO Report (Paper 1)

13. Grant Moir Chief Executive introduced Paper 1 which highlights the main strategic work streams that are being directed by Management Team. Grant explained that

these are areas where significant staff resources are being directed to deliver National Park Partnership Plan priorities. He highlighted the following areas:

- a) The outcome of the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the capercaillie framework should be forthcoming the following week.
- b) Dr Jos Milner has been appointed to the position of East Cairngorms Moorland Officer and will be based in Ballater.
- c) The informal session with the volunteers has been pushed back to the Informal discussion prior to the June Board meeting and the papers associated with that will be on the Formal Board agenda.
- d) The Local Development Plan Main Issues Report Consultation has now closed with over 300 responses. The responses are now being collated and analysed with the intention to present the findings to the Planning Committee at their May meeting.
- e) With regard to the formation of the Cairngorm Archive Trust, this is not led by the Park Authority although Murray Ferguson has been providing support.
- f) The Europarc Conference website will be going live over the next few weeks.
- g) New Office Extension – looking like July 2018 for the building handover to CNPA with the expectation of entry after fit out in September 2018.

14. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:

- a) Could an update on the recent meeting at Birkhall be given? Grant advised that the meeting had been around litter, moorland management and architecture. He went on to say that positive discussions had also taken place around the proposed visitor giving scheme for the Cairngorms.
- b) Could more details on the where and when of the Europarc conference be provided to the Board in advance of the website going live? Grant advised that the conference was to take place in Aviemore between 18 and 21 September and that he would like Board Members to attend the full conference if possible. He advised that Board members would be booked conference places through the website in the same way as other attendees. He asked Board Members who could not make the dates to inform the Clerk to the Board as soon as possible.
- c) Concern raised that during the discussions with HIE the evening before where they openly accepted that the R100 programme would not meet the target of 100% by 2021 having implications for the remoter areas of the National Park. David Cameron agreed but reminded the Board that the Cairngorms Community Broadband Company remained in place and may be the vehicle to address that problem moving forward, while accepting points made by members that costs of addressing any residual gaps in provision were likely to be extremely high. He added that a close eye was being kept on the situation.

- d) Will the Board have sight of the LDP MIR Consultation responses? Grant advised that David Berry and his team were currently collating and analysing the responses and creating a summary, he added that all the responses would be uploaded to the web and available to view from there.
 - e) With regards to the resubmission of the capercaillie HLF bid and the revised focus of the project, could it be explained? Grant advised that more emphasis had been placed on involving people in the capercaillie project.
 - f) In discussions with HIE the evening before they described economic data that they gather and whether the Park Authority could gain access to this? Murray Ferguson stated that during the discussions the evening before HIE had offered the Authority information relating to the business panel and that this would followed up.
 - g) What stage are Cairngorms Archive Trust at? Murray Ferguson explained that they were currently becoming constituted as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation and the new Trustees proposed taking forward the work through an agreement with the Highland Archive which is run by Highlife Highland.
 - h) Praise for the high number of web views as part of the LDP MIR Consultation.
 - i) How had the recent meeting with the CBP Chair gone? Grant confirmed that the meeting went well and another meeting had been organised to take place in mid-April 2018.
 - j) How had the Scottish Government workshop on the future of land use in Scotland gone? Grant Moir explained that there was a general consensus of where they would like to get to but less clarity on how we get there with many issues likely to be affected by Brexit.
 - k) Praise for the easy to read CEO Report paper.
 - l) Further detail sought on the statement relating to the Mountains and the People project. Pete Crane confirmed that there was a clear desire that a path be constructed on the stated site however there were complications with the land owner and when the situation changes he agreed to feed back to the board at an appropriate time when progress had been made.
 - m) The Convener reported that the Board Community/ Business evening in Tomintoul in February had been well-attended and positive discussions had taken place.
15. Judith Webb, Chair of Cairngorms Nature reminded the Board that the Cairngorms Nature weekend was scheduled to take place from 11th-13th May 2018 and put out a plea to Members to hold the dates to attend one of the events. She advised that it would be a good opportunity to meet with partners and get feedback from visitors.
16. Grant added that on the 11th May there was a Board Visit scheduled with Land Commission colleagues and that Frans Schepers from Rewilding Europe will also attend the Board.

17. The Board noted the Paper.

18. Actions:

- i. Board Members to submit their apologies to the Clerk to the Board for the Europarc conference as soon as possible.**
- ii. LDP MIR Consultation Responses to be uploaded for viewing on the corporate website.**
- iii. Murray Ferguson to pursue accessing information on HIE's business panel.**
- iv. Pete Crane to feedback on the progress made with the Mountains and the People Project at an appropriate time.**

Cairngorms National Park Authority – Corporate Plan 2018-22 (Paper 2)

- 18. Grant Moir, CEO, introduced Paper 2 which presents the Corporate Plan for 2018 – 2022. He advised that the Corporate Plan had been developed in the context of Ministerial approved National Partnership Plan 2017 – 2022 and had had significant Board and staff involvement in its preparation. He added that the national framework on page 13 of the Corporate Plan was likely to change given that the Scottish Government's National Framework was about to be laid before Parliament.**
- 19. The Board discussed the paper and made the following comments and observations:**
 - a) Praise for the rocket diagram clearly helping to put everything into context in a clear way.**
 - b) How many capercaillie were there now? Pete Mayhew reported that in Scotland there were around 1150 of which approx. 1050 are in the Cairngorms National Park: 1000 in Strathspey and 50 in Deeside.**
 - c) With reference to page 7 of Annex 1, John Muir Award what did 'disadvantaged backgrounds' mean? Pete Crane explained that it was website based, identified from each person's address. He admitted that it could be challenging to access that data if people were signing up to the award through organised groups and they are keen to work with groups who work with people who are less inclined to do this.**
 - d) With reference to page 12 of Annex 1 did the Operation Plan and staff costs broadly align with previous years? Grant confirmed that they did.**
 - e) Clarity sought in the meaning of the word 'underpinned'. Grant explained that the delivery of the content of the Corporate Plan could not be delivered**

- f) Following on from board discussions that had taken place last year what was the current position on board remuneration? The Convener advised that this aspect would be covered as part of Paper 4.
- g) Concern raised that the remaining operational budget after staff costs would be squeezed going forward. Grant agreed that pay awards for staff do cause the staffing costs to increase however he explained that the Operational Plan budget is higher than it was last year. He added that the new extension would increase the rental costs but that MT were continually keeping a close eye on staff costs and the need for sizeable operational budget.

21. **Action:** **None.**

22. Pete Crane, Head of Visitor Services introduced Paper 3 which presents the Communications and Engagement Strategy for 2018 – 2022.
23. Grant Moir, CEO explained that the Scottish Government currently had two campaigns of interest to the Authority that the Authority could tap into. The themes of these campaigns are ‘connecting people with nature’ and ‘climate change’. He added that, the Authority is being described as an organisation that does communications well by many of our stakeholder contacts.
24. Brian Wood, Chair of the Communications and Brand group made the following points:
 - a) Reminded the Board that this was a high level document that was not intended to provide the level of detail on the day to day work going forward.
 - b) They had come a long way with the use of social media and the website but these would continue to be developed.
 - c) There is work to be done with landowners and with residents within the Park over the next 4 years.
 - d) Concern raised with regards to the monitoring and evaluation related to the measuring of people’s attitudes.

25. The Board considered the detail of the paper and discussed the following points:

- a) Suggestion made that there was an opportunity to advertise the Cairngorms National Park at Aberdeen airport while it is being upgraded. Grant advised that this would be looked into but probably sits best with the Cairngorms Business Partnership and VisitAberdeenshire.
- b) At a recent meeting of VisitAberdeenshire that a Board Member had attended concern was raised that the presentation had no mention of the Snow Roads or the National Park. Murray Ferguson agreed follow up the opportunities with Chris Foy, VisitAberdeenshire's new CEO.
- c) Thinking about promotion at the other ends that fly into Aberdeen how could we advertise the visitor experience available in and around Aberdeen that awaits them?
- d) Concern that the targets do not recognise the role of rangers in interacting with visitors on the ground. Grant agreed to look into it how the role of Rangers can be mentioned in the Communications Strategy.
- e) Suggestion made to use targeted social media adverts to target people to come to the Cairngorms. Grant advised that in general that a responsibility of VisitScotland and that the Authority pays VisitScotland £20,000/ year to promote the National Park through campaigns that are mainly social media driven. He added that the organisation has used targeted Facebook adverts in the past to promote specific events like Cairngorms Nature.
- f) Could a copy of the VisitScotland's report on the promotion they had undertaken for the National Park be circulated? Grant agreed to circulate it.
- g) A Board member reported that she had attended a destination management conference where VisitAberdeenshire had been encouraging by stating how important the National Park was for the area.
- h) Suggestion was made to reorder the target audiences against the aims. Grant agreed to consider how to structure it better taking into consideration why one audience may be more important than another in the context of the National Park aims.

26. The Board agreed to approve the Communications and Engagement Strategy for 2018 – 2022.

27. Actions:

- i. **Murray Ferguson to follow up opportunities with Chris Foy of VisitAberdeenshire.**
- ii. **Grant Moir to look at how to integrate the role of Rangers into the Strategy.**

- iii. **VisitScotland's reports on the marketing campaigns to be circulated to the Board as they are produced.**
- iv. **Grant Moir to consider how to structure the audiences better in line with the National Park aims.**

2018/19 Budget and Operational Plan (Paper 4)

- 28. David Cameron, Director of Corporate Services introduced Paper 4 which sets out the Authority's financial allocations for 2018/19 for core income and expenditure, together with intended operational plan investment and seeks Board approval to the budget and Operational Plan for 2018/19. In response to the earlier query from a member on the remuneration of Board fees, he reported that the Staffing & Recruitment Committee at their meeting this morning had decided to implement the fee uplift provided for in pay policy for the forthcoming financial year.
- 29. Brian Wood, Staffing & Recruitment Committee Convener explained that the proposed salary award for staff and board fees had been discussed as part of the Committee's agenda this morning. He reminded the Board that they had not taken the increase in fees last year and that following a discussion they agreed to take the increase in the coming year, 2018/19.
- 30. The Board discussed the Board taking the increase in Board fee and agreed to go ahead with the pay deal subject to Scottish Government approval.
- 31. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
 - a) With reference to Annex I of the paper, could it be explained why Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership had zero committed under Visitor Services on page 4, but it had £50,000 committed under Rural Development on page 6? Grant confirmed that it was presentational and that the commitment (money and staff resources) had been split out over different directorates.
 - b) With reference to page 6 of Annex I, what was the £5,000 budgeted to the DPEA for? Grant confirmed that this was to pay the reporter for the upcoming work associated with the Local Development Plan. He explained that the payment is split across two years.

- c) Could reassurance be provided that sufficient resource is being put into enforcement and monitoring? Grant confirmed that the Planning Team were now up to full complement.
 - d) With reference to page 5 of Annex 1, under Tourism, £10,000 had been budgeted against visitor giving could an indication of what that was likely to be, be given? Grant advised that a paper on visitor giving would be brought before the Board at their next meeting in June 2018.
32. **The Board considered the budget proposals for 2018/19 presented in the paper and approved the financial allocations for 2018/19**

33. **Action: None.**

Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group (Paper 5)

34. Pete Mayhew, Director of Conservation and Visitor Experience introduced Paper 5 which sets out the proposed establishment of a Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group (CUAG) to address integration of land use objectives and bring together all relevant interests to shape good practise in the Cairngorms National Park.
35. Judith Webb, Chair of the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group (CDAG) advised that they had taken on board comments from CDAG and were actively in the transition stage, specifically agreeing membership of the new Group and developing its Terms of Reference. For avoidance of confusion, the new name would be Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group as opposed to Forum.
36. The Board considered the detail in the Paper and discussions took place around the following:
- a) Could it be confirmed that the idea was not to have a set membership but rather the Group to be dependent on the topic and have guest speakers in? Judith advised that this was the case however it was the intention to have a core membership of the Group.
 - b) Could hill tracks be one of the topics be put on the agenda as early as possible? Judith agreed and noted this.
 - c) Concern raised that the subject area of the group may not be specific enough. Pete Mayhew advised that the group would be focussed on the priorities related to what the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) needs to target that year.
 - d) Grant informed the Board that the Cairngorms Campaign and the North East Mountain Trust had expressed an interest in becoming members of the Group to represent different issues.

- e) Clarification sought as to who would be advising who? Pete Mayhew confirmed that it would be a two-way process, where the Authority would seek members' point of view and the Authority may want to use members of the group to get messages out into their member bodies.
 - f) Suggestion made to include a tourism representative in the Group.
37. **The Board approved the establishment of the Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group as per the National Park Partnership Plan 2017 – 2022.**
38. **Actions:**
- i. **Hill Tracks as an item of discussion to be added to CUAG's agenda.**
 - ii. **Consideration be given to a tourism representative on CUAG.**

AOCB

39. The Board were reminded that there were two weeks remaining for entries to Scotland's Finest Woods Awards.
40. The Board were reminded that on the 23rd March 2018 the Forest & Woodland Strategy Consultation would be ending and plea was made to encourage networks to prompt people to submit a response.
41. **Actions: None.**

Date of Next Meeting

42. Next formal Board meeting to be held on 15 June 2018, The Community Hall, Nethybridge.
43. The Public part of this meeting concluded at 12.40.