

# CAIRNGORMS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ADVISORY FORUM

## MINUTES

**Date:** 25 January 2012  
**Time:** 14:00  
**Venue:** Boat Hotel, Boat of Garten

### Present

|    |                 |  |
|----|-----------------|--|
| 1  | Scott Armstrong | VisitScotland  |
| 2  | Jaci Douglas    | Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Board (Chair)    |
| 3  | Sally Dowden    | Tourism Businesses (Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP)) |
| 4  | Debbie Greene   | Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)                            |
| 5  | Johnnie Grant   | National Farmers Union(NFU)                                |
| 6  | Kate Howie      | Association of Cairngorms Communities / CNPA Board         |
| 7  | Keith Legge     | Tourism Businesses (CBP)                                   |
| 8  | Nick Mardall    | Deeside / Donside Development Officer                      |
| 9  | Rita Marks      | Association of Cairngorms Communities                      |
| 10 | Jeremy Roberts  | Scottish Environment LINK                                  |
| 11 | Alan Rankin     | Cairngorms Business Partnership                            |
| 12 | Kevin Roach     | Tourism Businesses (CBP)                                   |
| 13 | Drennan Watson  | Scottish Environment LINK                                  |

### In attendance

|   |                 |   |
|---|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Chris Bremner   | CNPA  |
| 2 | Dougie Baird    | Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) – (Presenting) |
| 3 | Pete Crane      | CNPA  |
| 4 | Jackie Farquhar | CNPA  |
| 5 | Murray Ferguson | CNPA  |
| 6 | Peter Ord       | COAT (Presenting)                                     |
| 7 | Frances Thin    | CNPA (Presenting)                                     |
| 8 | Heather Trench  | CNPA (Secretary)                                      |

### Apologies

|   |                  |                          |
|---|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Robert Armstrong | Aberdeenshire Council    |
| 2 | Colin Simpson    | Highland Council         |
| 3 | Hillary Tasker   | Angus Council            |
| 4 | Bryn Wayte       | Tourism Businesses (CBP) |
| 5 | Jamie Williamson | Scottish Land & Estates  |

## **Welcome and Introductions**

1. JD welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jackie Farquhar who will be replacing Heather Trench for the next year. JD also introduced the group to Dougie Baird and Peter Ord (COAT) and Frances Thin (CNPA) who had come along to update the group on their work.

## **Apologies**

2. As noted above.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

3. The minutes were approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting.
4. Action point 1 – This has been superseded by Action point 1
5. Action Point 2 – Complete. HT asked that if any members of the group would like a copy to contact JF. The summary booklet will be sent out to all tourism businesses in the National Park.
6. Action point 3 – Ongoing. Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and SNH are conducting a joint Recreation Survey which may help inform this.
7. Action point 4 – JR, DG and CNPA staff will meet in February 2012 to consider how best to gather data for the indicator ‘Landscape & habitat quality/change and species numbers in sensitive areas’. The outcome of this discussion will be brought to the next meeting of the Cairngorms Sustainable Tourism Forum (CSTF).
8. Action point 5 – see later agenda item.
9. Action point 6 – Complete
10. Action points 7, 8 & 9 - Complete

## **Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust – Presentation**

11. Peter Ord (Chair of COAT), and Dougie Baird (Trust Manager) gave a presentation on the work of the Trust to date. This involved not only the creation and renovation of core, community and high level paths and path networks but also health walks and apprenticeships.
12. A discussion followed and mainly focused on how the work of COAT could be sustained and expanded in the future, especially with the reduction in the available public funds.
13. Consideration was given to how best to increase private donations especially from the users of the paths. AR advised the group that the Activity Providers Group discussed this and would be actively looking at it over the coming year.

14. It was recognised that some businesses do indeed contribute in different ways to paths that add value their business and consideration could be given to formalising this so that the monies are redirected to COAT, potentially through the CBP.
15. Some form of Visitor Payback was touched on by the group and CB advised that this had been considered and a report was commissioned back in 2009 by the CNPA and the then Aviemore & Cairngorms DMO. At the time of the report it was felt that this type of park-wide scheme was not appropriate for the National Park.
16. The group agreed that they would like to revisit this at a future meeting.

**AP1: HT to re circulate the report –A park-wide Visitor Payback Initiative, A scoping study for the cairngorms National Park (2009) to the group.**

**AP2: DB to circulate link to COAT Health Walks**

[http://www.cairngormsoutdooraccess.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=146&Itemid=60](http://www.cairngormsoutdooraccess.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=146&Itemid=60)

**AP3: CBP to feed back on progression with COAT and Activities Provider Group meeting.**

### **Mountain Biking Development**

17. PC updated the group on current work relating to mountain biking:
- The Scottish Mountain Bike Development Consortium developed a National Strategic Framework
  - This will be delivered through development clusters; the Highland Development Cluster also includes areas of the National Park outwith Highland (additional funding for this additional work was provided by the CNPA).
  - The Highland Development Cluster is currently undertaking a piece of desk research to collate information on the current provision of mountain biking within their area; to identify any gaps in provision; the potential for economic growth, health and sporting benefits relating to mountain biking.
  - This will result in an action plan to maximize the benefits of mountain biking from the target areas suggested from the Framework. It is at this point that the CSTF and the Local Outdoor Access Forum (LOAF) will be able to input.
18. The group discussed the proposed work of the Consortium and agreed that the focus for the National Park should be on cycling in the wider sense and not just mountain biking.

**AP4: CNPA and CBP to organise a day in May 2012 to further discuss topics surrounding cycling in the National Park. This would be open to partners, local communities and interested parties**

## **Landscape Toolkit**

19. Frances Thin (CNPA) updated the group on her work developing the innovative Landscape Toolkit.
20. The Landscape Toolkit will provide more accessible landscape information, for planners, advisers, decision-makers and the public, via the CNP website. It is not about 'yes' or 'no' but is about putting information into the public domain and achieving solutions for people and the landscape. It will help to enhance the special landscape qualities of the Park and provide an avenue for people to share their knowledge.
21. The group discussed challenges of managing the ever changing landscape with retaining the special qualities of the area.
22. A sample of information from the Toolkit will be put on the website in March 2012 and FT would welcome any comments and feedback from the group.

## **Sustainable Tourism Strategy Action Plan**

23. The CSTF is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Action Plan and CB introduced Paper 1 which sets out a revised draft summary Action Plan format. The aim is to keep the Action Plan as simple as possible to enable delivery to be tracked.
24. The group noted the new format.
25. The group agreed that an update of the Action Plan should be brought to each meeting with an agenda item once a year.

**AP5: The group to inform CB of any ongoing or planned activity not already detailed in the Action Plan that will contribute to its delivery.**

## **Project Updates**

26. CB introduced Paper 2 which provides an update on some of the main areas of work that will contribute to the delivery of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy.
27. JD reminded the group that all members were able to contribute to this paper which is a standing item on the agenda.

**AP6: JF to request information updates from members in advance of future meetings.**

## **AOCB**

### Google Maps

28. HT informed the group that Google are currently working to ensure that the Park boundary appears on Google Maps and that this should be in place in the very near future.

Sustainable Retailers in the Park

29. The CBP will be considering the above and will bring it back to the Forum at some point.

**Date of Next Meeting**

30. The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 23 May 2012 in Tomintoul – venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 16:20

**Jackie Farquhar**  
**3 February 2012**