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THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Parklife

Park's bold housing plan

DAVID GOWANS



Braemar

The CNPA has outlined how it hopes to tackle affordable housing problems in the Park, in a bid to achieve more sustainable communities in the future.

The lack of access to affordable and good quality homes has been identified by many communities as a key issue facing the National Park. Young people and those on low incomes in

particular need better opportunities to secure homes in their communities.

Board members have agreed a preferred strategic direction for affordable housing in the area. Among

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the measures to be investigated further are: the principle of residency criteria to ensure that new market housing is meeting the economic and social needs of communities; exploring a change to planning legislation to the effect that a change of use from a permanent home into a second or holiday home would require planning permission; encouraging greater private sector investment and encouraging and supporting community owned low cost rented housing.

Studies carried out by Heriot-Watt and Manchester Universities for the Park Authority and based on current trends, has predicted that the number of people aged 60-74 living in the Park will increase by 85 per cent from 2001 to 2025 while the number of people

continued on page two

Park's bold housing plan continued

aged 0-39 years over the same period is expected to drop by 30 per cent.

The popularity of the area means a high demand for housing, including second homes, increasing prices beyond the range of many people and placing pressure on the special qualities of the Park. In 2004 the average price for a two bedroom property across the National Park was £98,000 - £110,000, with only 38 per cent of people aged below 35 years able to get a start on the housing ladder.

The CNPA's head of economic and social development Andrew Harper said: "As a new park authority, we have come up with some bold proposals which we believe will help tackle the problem of affordable housing."

CNPA convener Andrew Thin said: "The Park Authority has a duty to promote the sustainable development of the local communities while also conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage of the Park.

"This is not an easy balance to strike so the Park Authority, working with partners needs to find innovative solutions and sometimes make difficult decisions. We need to ensure that there is land provision in the Local Plan for affordable housing developments and that those developments are meeting the economic and social needs of the Park's communities whilst not impacting on the special qualities."

Making housing affordable and sustainable is a priority for action in the Draft National Park Plan, which was out for consultation earlier this year. The preferred strategic direction for housing is now being looked at in relation to the responses received during the consultation.

PERSONNEL

CNPA welcomes new board members



Ross Watson



Nonie Coulthard

Two new board members have joined the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Dr Nonie Coulthard, from Glen Isla, is a consultant in ecology and biodiversity conservation and has experience working in conservation management. Ross Watson, from Nethybridge, is a nature reserve warden and ghillie. He is also a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

Mr Watson and Dr Coulthard replace former members, Joyce Simpson and Sally Dowden, who stepped down from the board in March. Lucy Grant, Alastair MacLennan and Eric Baird have been reappointed for a second term.

TOURISM

Granite signs start to appear

The first phase of the project to install 21 granite markers at all road and long distance route entrances to the Park is getting underway.

The markers have been manufactured by Fyfe Glenrock in Oldmeldrum from stone sourced from within the National Park. Hunter Construction, from Aberdeen, is installing the smaller markers at various locations over the summer and work will continue during the autumn months.

Financial support for the project has been secured from Moray and Highland Councils, Local Enterprise Companies and the European Regional Development Fund.

Phase two of the project – installation of larger markers on the four trunk roads – is scheduled to take place in the summer of 2007.



CNPA board members inspect one of the 3m markers for major road entrances to the Park.



Boulder to mark minor road entrance

ENVIRONMENT

Good communications

DAVID GOWANS



Picking up grouse, Strathdon

Land managers in the Cairngorms National Park play a crucial role in helping to deliver the aims of the Park – they influence how the Park looks and have a pivotal role in affecting the quality of people's experience.

That is why the Park Authority has introduced a grant scheme, which is designed to help land managers improve their communication with the public and other audiences.

The aim of the newly piloted 'Communications Grant Scheme' is to help land based businesses tell the

story of the work they do; why and when they do things; how they do things and how that helps deliver benefits that everyone can enjoy from improved habitats for wildlife to better recreational opportunities. It is also about giving the public more opportunities to influence what happens on the ground.

Senior land management officer at the CNPA, Will Boyd-Wallis said: "We want the Communications Grant Scheme to help land managers to think creatively about new ways of engaging in dialogue with the

community, visitors and the wider public. Already some great events have been planned and we are hoping for lots more throughout the Park."

The types of activities that land based businesses can apply to the grant scheme for are: public meetings, events or open days; school visits and guided walks; leaflets, newsletters and websites.

For more information on the grant scheme please contact Will Boyd Wallis on tel: 01479 870547 / email: willboydwallis@cairngorms.co.uk

COMMUNITY

Rural housing enabler

A Rural Housing Enabler is working with selected communities in Aberdeenshire to identify housing needs in the area. The project is a unique partnership involving the Cairngorms National Park Authority; Aberdeenshire Council; the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association and local housing agencies.

Elaine Bain has been employed to carry out research with selected rural communities in the Aberdeenshire area of the Park to help identify housing needs and solutions.

For more information please contact Elaine on tel: 07703 045801 or email: elaine@ruralhousingscotland.org

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Creative Cairngorms

A new arts and crafts association has been set up in the Cairngorms National Park to help promote the sector and to highlight its importance to the area both economically and culturally.

'Creative Cairngorms' is open to anyone living and working in the Park who is involved in the arts and crafts sector, from painters and potters to knitters and wood turners as well as retailers of products. Anyone involved in arts and crafts outwith the Park can also apply for associate membership of the organisation.

'Creative Cairngorms' has been established with help from the CNPA and The Highland Council.

Barry Horning, a jewellery box and clock maker from Tomintoul, is chairman of the new group. He said: "The formation of the National Park has given us an ideal opportunity to bring to the notice of residents and



visitors alike, the wide range of arts and crafts created within the Park. The superbly high standard of work may come as a surprise to many and we should be proud to promote it as effectively as possible."

Through 'Creative Cairngorms' it is hoped that various initiatives will take off in the coming months and years including the establishment of an arts and crafts trail, better connections

between producers and retailers across the Park and improved marketing of arts and crafts.

Anyone interested in joining 'Creative Cairngorms' should contact: Barry Horning, A'anside Studios tel: 01479 872074 / email: aanside@btconnect.com or David Fallows, Newtonmore Craft Centre and Gallery on tel: 01540 673026 / email: djf@saltire.net

ENVIRONMENT

Funds still available for biodiversity projects

Communities and other groups in and around the Cairngorms National Park with creative ideas for biodiversity projects are being encouraged to apply for funding from the Biodiversity Grant Scheme.

Around £30,000 is still available from the scheme which was launched in August 2006 and is supported by the CNPA, Scottish Natural Heritage, LEADER+ and three local authorities.

Activities such as the conservation of important local species and habitats, and which reflect the aims of the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan, are eligible for 100 per cent funding (up to a maximum of £5,000) and projects should have wide community involvement.

Some groups that have already received funding for projects in the grant scheme's first year are:

- The **Grampian Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group** was awarded £5,000 for a project in Strathdon to develop farm action plans that will help conserve lapwings and to undertake a survey on current lapwing populations.
- The **Laggan Forest Trust** was awarded £4,900 for the development of a wildlife garden and pond for the Laggan community.
- The **Glen Tanar Charitable Trust** was awarded £500 to host a public event which showed people how to build bird boxes and garden animal feeders from waste materials.

- The community of **Insh** was awarded £4,500 to develop and manage a community meadow and woodland for the benefit of biodiversity and people.

Biodiversity officer for the Cairngorms, Stephen Corcoran said: "The Biodiversity Grant Scheme is proving very popular but there are still funds available for those groups with ideas for projects that will help enhance and conserve the variety of life here in the Cairngorms."

For more information on the Biodiversity Grant Scheme, contact the Cairngorms biodiversity officer, Stephen Corcoran at the CNPA offices in Grantown-on-Spey, tel: 01479 870528 / email: stephencorcoran@cairngorms.co.uk

WILDLIFE

Top John Muir Award for Boat couple



A couple from Boat of Garten in Strathspey have achieved the highest John Muir Award there is.

Allan and Heather Bantick have been awarded the John Muir Conserver Award having spent over a year discovering and exploring local wild places. Being the highest accolade, The Conserver Award has only been achieved by a handful of people throughout the country.

Explaining how they achieved this award, Heather Bantick said: "We set out to find a wild place close to Boat of Garten, but as we looked we found so much more. Although the village contains many buildings and streets, there are still many wild places both within and around it."



The Banticks receive their John Muir Award

Many species will have benefited from Allan and Heather's John Muir Award activity including red squirrels, crested tits, badgers, otters and bats, but the intrepid couple see this as just the beginning.

Allan Bantick added: "The John Muir Award has helped us focus our efforts, but has also revealed to us how much more we can do and learn. We would definitely advise other people to get involved with the John Muir Award. You get a great sense of achievement and feel good about conserving wild places and sharing your experiences."

The couple are now embarking on a biodiversity audit of the area, which is being funded by the Park Authority.

Paths for the Park

Across Scotland, local authorities and National Park authorities are working together to identify a network of Core Paths, which will make it easy for everyone to enjoy the outdoors.

Core Paths are those which are seen as main routes and which are needed to provide people with reasonable access throughout their area.

Core Paths will provide opportunities for everyone including walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and canoeists to get about and to access a huge range of other paths. They need to be welcoming, and where possible, barrier free. They should be easy to follow with clear signposting and good information to give people the confidence to use them. By doing so, this will allow people of all ages and abilities to get around their area whether it be for getting to the shops, walking the dog or just enjoying the outdoors.

Senior outdoor access officer at the CNPA, Bob Grant, explained: "To ensure Core Paths can meet all these needs we need help from the public to

identify those paths that are important to them, so that we can develop the best possible Core Paths Plan for the Park."

The Newtonmore Community Woodland and Development Trust, the Lonach Hall Community Association and Braemar Primary School have all been helping the Park Authority to find out how best to get people involved in developing path networks. As a result, the CNPA will be targeting three main groups to work with – communities, people working on the land and people enjoying the outdoors.

Sandra Middleton, outdoor access officer said: "To find out what people want we will be running workshops with these groups throughout the Park this autumn so please come along and get involved. After this first stage of information gathering there will be further opportunities over the next 18 months for people to help us develop the Plan.

"As well as these workshops there

will be a number of other ways that people can take part, including keeping up to date with developments through our website or by contacting us directly.

"The Core Paths Plan is for everyone; even those who currently don't do much walking, cycling, horse riding or canoeing so please get involved and make your views on this important aspect of life in the Cairngorms known."

Establishing a network of Core Paths in the Cairngorms National Park is a statutory duty for the CNPA, along with upholding people's right to responsible outdoor access, establishing a local outdoor access forum and publicising the new Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

For more information, please contact the CNPA's Outdoor Access team on tel: 013397 53607 or email: outdooraccess@cairngorms.co.uk, or visit the website www.cairngorms.co.uk/access

the core paths network should cater for all ages and abilities



STEWART GRANT/CNPA



pony trekking at Balmoral – a core paths network should offer opportunities for a variety of different users

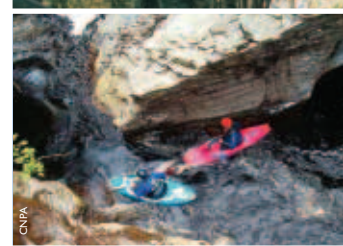
STEWART BUCHANAN



Braemar Primary School children point out their favourite paths



CNPA



rivers and lochs can be core paths too

tourists and interpretative panel, Glen Esk, Angus – core paths network should be clearly signposted and easy to follow



CULTURE

Gaelic place-names spelt out in new booklet

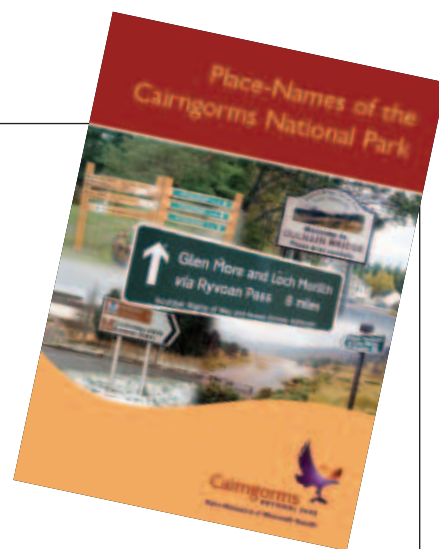
The CNPA has produced a new full colour leaflet giving residents and visitors a guide to the pronunciation and meaning of a selection of place-names in the Cairngorms National Park including some of the towns and villages, rivers, burns, forests, woods and hills.

These place-names give us some insight into the rich culture and heritage of the area.

Some of the earliest place-names derive from the languages spoken by the Picts. While the majority of the current place-names within the Park are Gaelic in origin, Scots place-names also feature.

Here are some examples:

- Bellabeg (Am Baile Beag) – The Little Town
- Tomintoul (Tom an t-Sabhail) – The Knoll of the Barn
- The Firmounth (Am Monadh Giuthais) – The Mounth of Pine
- Loch Pityoulish (Loch Peit Gheollais) – The Loch of the Settlement of the Bright Place
- River Livet (Lìomhaid) – Shining or Flooding One
- Lochnagar – The Little Loch of the Noisy Sound
- Am Monadh Ruadh – The Russet-coloured Mountain Range
- The Smugglers' Shank (Scots) – the Smugglers Ridge



Look out for copies of 'Place-Names of the Cairngorms National Park' in tourist information offices, ranger bases, accommodation providers and visitor attractions. Alternatively contact the CNPA direct on tel: 01479 873535 or email: enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk for a copy.

INCLUSION

Big Issue trip to the big park!



The Big Issue Foundation and the CNPA teamed up over the summer to give eight homeless people the opportunity to experience a weekend of activities in the Cairngorms and to take part in the John Muir Award.

This pilot venture is now helping explore ways of encouraging traditionally excluded groups of people to access the benefits and resources of the Park.

Supported by the Park Authority and Cairngorms LEADER+, the Big

Issue Foundation was able to purchase a pool of camping equipment which is now available for other homeless people to use.

Jim Brown of the Big Issue Foundation said: "We welcome this initiative by the Park Authority. The outdoors can be an important tool in helping people to deal with a range of problems. Trips like this take people to places they've never been, giving them opportunities they haven't had in the past. That pays massive dividends."

TOURISM

Going green

An increasing number of tourism businesses within the Cairngorms National Park are demonstrating a commitment to environmental responsibility through membership of the Green Tourism Business Scheme. As a result, the idea of a Cairngorms Green Business Club has been suggested.

As well as allowing networking and sharing of best practice in green tourism, meetings and events could be arranged with green suppliers or guest speakers on 'green' topics of interest.

The idea of a Cairngorms Green Business Club has emerged following a series of events, organised by the CNPA and VisitScotland, focusing on the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

Heather Galbraith, the CNPA's sustainable tourism officer said: "There is a real 'green' commitment amongst businesses in the Park. They definitely want to be seen to be contributing to the protection and enhancement of the outstanding natural environment that attracts visitors here in the first place."

For more information please contact Heather on tel: 01479 870545 / email: heathergalbraith@cairngorms.co.uk

POLICY

Progress made on Park Plan and Local Plan



Cairngorms from Dorback

The Cairngorms National Park Authority has a statutory duty to produce both a National Park Plan and a Local Plan and good progress is being made on the development of both of these strategic documents.

The Draft National Park Plan – which sets out the long term vision (25 years) for the Park as a whole as well as priorities for the first five years of the Plan (2007-2012) – was launched in April, starting a three month consultation period.

The Park Authority is now considering all the responses and issues raised and is working with partners to identify the options to address these and develop the final Park Plan. The completed Plan is due to be submitted to the Scottish Executive by the end of the year for approval, and will be accompanied by a report of the consultation showing



Tomintoul

how the views received have been addressed.

The Local Plan sets out a clear strategy for built development in the Park with land use planning policies and site specific proposals for development, enhancement or protection of the area. The consultation on the Local Plan Consultative Draft ended in February 2006 and the CNPA's planning team has spent the summer analysing all the responses, using them to develop

the Finalised Draft Local Plan.

The Finalised Draft Local Plan will be put 'on deposit' for formal consultation early in 2007 after also taking into account feedback from the consultation on the Draft National Park Plan.

Although open for national comment, community engagement has always been a pivotal part of the consultation process for CNPA planners working on the development of the Local Plan, with the end-result of everyone being able to buy-into this land-use planning 'blueprint' for the Park.

To keep up-to-date with developments on both the National Park Plan and Local Plan please visit the CNPA website: www.cairngorms.co.uk or contact us direct on tel: 01479 873535 / 013397 53601



STEWART GRANTON/PA

The Thin Line

by Andrew Thin, convener of the Cairngorms National Park Authority

My daughter is about to start her first term at secondary school. By the time many of the actions now being taken by the CNPA come to full fruition, she may well have children of school age herself. This is quite a daunting thought. How can we be certain that we are making the right decisions when the timescales involved are so long? There is plenty of scope for the unexpected to come along in the intervening years. Will the next generation praise our foresight or curse our myopic vision?

Earlier this year we published a consultative draft of the new National Park Plan for the

Cairngorms. In part this is rightly focused on priority actions for the next five years. There will be hard choices to be made but the Plan also contains what we have termed a "2030 vision", and in many ways this is the more exciting bit. How will the place look in 25 years time? What will it be like to live and work here? What sort of contributions will we be making to the lives of people living in the rest of Scotland? In short what kind of legacy do we intend to leave our children and grandchildren?

One of the most alarming long term challenges is the risk that our children and grandchildren will not be able to live here at all if we do not address the growing shortage of affordable housing. By 2030 the proportion of people over 60 will have nearly doubled on current forecasts, while the proportion of working age will have almost halved.

This is neither economically sustainable nor socially acceptable. Who will look after all these elderly people? Who will manage the shops, work in the essential services or collect the rubbish? And who will manage the land and look after our visitors – both vital to the continuation of an effective National Park. We must not allow these predictions to come true.

So the Park Authority and everyone else involved in managing this special place have some pretty hard decisions to take. Resources are finite and we must continue to prioritise. We must not, however, allow ourselves to be seduced by the temptations of short-term quick wins. We are not here solely for the benefit of the current generation. We must think ahead. We must recognise the interests of our children and of those as yet unborn. They will not thank us for being selfish.

WILDLIFE

Water voles get extra protection in the Park

Water voles in the Cairngorms National Park have been given their own conservation officer.

Laura Taylor has been appointed as a water vole conservation officer as part of a new three-year partnership project funded by the CNPA, Scottish Natural Heritage and Aberdeen University.

The Cairngorms is one of the water vole's last strongholds and therefore it is important to ensure they continue to thrive in the Park.

Laura said: "Water voles are critically endangered in Britain and really need our help. The American mink, which prey on water voles, is the biggest threat so much of our efforts will be focused on controlling them to give water vole a



LEIGH MURRAY

Water vole

greater chance of recovery.

"At the same time it will be important to check how the water vole population is faring and to

identify smaller populations in the Park and keep an eye on them."

Rob Raynor, species advisor at SNH, said: "The water vole is one of a number of animals and plants which need extra help to recover, so it is very exciting to have a dedicated officer in post to ensure this species gets the best possible support."

Monitoring of both water vole and mink will be carried out using a special raft equipped with a tracking device, which is activated when an animal steps onto the raft.

For more information on the water vole conservation project contact Laura Taylor at the Park Authority's offices in Grantown-on-Spey, tel: 01479 870570 / email: laurataylor@cairngorms.co.uk

WILDLIFE

Frogs and fish

SNH



Frog

Two new leaflets are available from the Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) – and both outline how the public can help with the projects featured.

The first relates to the Cairngorms Non-Native Fish project and warns about the threats that non-native species pose to the wildlife of the Cairngorms. This colour leaflet also explains the actions that you can take to combat the spread of non-native species like Japanese knotweed or North American signal crayfish, and where to send records of any non-native species you see.

Records are also sought for toads, frogs and newts across the area in a new leaflet on Cairngorms

amphibians. Across the world disease – introduced by non-native species – and habitat loss are causing large declines in amphibians.

The Cairngorms LBAP is asking for help to clarify what is the local status of amphibians. A simple survey form and a guide to identifying all five of the Cairngorms amphibians are contained within the leaflet.

The biodiversity officer for the Cairngorms, Stephen Corcoran said: "We need as much assistance as possible from the public with both of these initiatives."

Both leaflets are available in various outlets across the National Park such as fishing tackle shops and ranger bases. They can also be obtained by contacting the CNPA direct on tel: 01479 873535 or email: enquires@cairngorms.co.uk

COMMUNICATIONS

Keep up to date with e-bulletin

The Cairngorms National Park Authority has launched a monthly e-bulletin service so that people – from the Cairngorms to Caracus – can keep up to date with the work of the Park Authority!

The e-bulletin is a monthly service, giving subscribers the most up-to-date information on a range of issues and projects from nature conservation work, outdoor access and training to land management, tourism and planning. People will also be able to keep up to date with the latest developments on the National Park Plan and the Local Plan.

To subscribe to the CNPA's e-bulletin service, please log on to: www.cairngorms.co.uk and click on the e-bulletin button on the homepage

TRAINING

Land based business courses

The Land Based Business Training Project is funded by the CNPA and the European Social Fund. It is open to any business that is involved in the use or management of the land including estates, farms, crofts, forestry operations, outdoor recreation businesses and horticultural nurseries.

The project can part fund courses which will help improve the competitiveness and efficiency of a business such as the use and maintenance of machinery, equipment and vehicles; environmental courses; business skills and health and safety. Fully funded courses are those which deliver public benefits such as training relating to outdoor access; disability awareness; communication; habitat improvements and so on.

The following courses are being held over the next few months and are free to land based businesses. Please contact Kate Christie on tel: 01479 870535 / email: katechristie@cairngorms.co.uk or Sara Krawczynska on tel: 01479 870511 / email: sarakrawczynska@cairngorms.co.uk

August 2006:

- Pond creation and habitat management
- Habitat monitoring

September 2006:

- Waste management for land based industries
- Interpreting the geology of the Cairngorms

October 2006:

- Best use of signage to promote responsible access

November 2006:

- How to get your message across in writing
- The use of wood fuel

COMMUNICATIONS

Parklife

Don't forget – Parklife is available in a variety of formats. You can read the newsletter on our website, www.cairngorms.co.uk, or we can provide copies of all the articles in large print. It's also available on audio cassette.

If you have any comments or suggestions for the newsletter, please contact us at: Cairngorms National Park Authority, 14 The Square, Grantown-on-Spey PH26 3HG, tel: 01479 873535, email: enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk

Contact:

Cairngorms National Park Authority, 14 The Square, Grantown-on-Spey PH26 3HG
tel: 01479 873535, fax: 01479 873527, email: enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk

OR Albert Memorial Hall, Station Square, Ballater AB35 5QB

tel: 013397 53601, fax: 013397 55334, email: planning@cairngorms.co.uk

www.cairngorms.co.uk

WHAT'S ON?

River Feshie



DAVID GOWANS

Park Authority meetings

August 10

Open evening with CNPA board and staff, Carr-Bridge

August 11

Planning committee and board meeting, Grantown-on-Spey

August 25

Audit committee and planning committee, Ballater

September 7

Open evening with CNPA board and staff, Kincaig

September 8

Planning committee and board meeting, Kingussie

September 22

Planning committee, Ballater

October 5

Open evening with CNPA board and staff, Braemar

October 6

Planning committee and board meeting, Braemar

October 20

Finance committee and planning committee, Grantown-on-Spey

Further details regarding venues and times of board and committee meetings can be found on the CNPA website at www.cairngorms.co.uk/parkauthority or see local press.

