



COP26 Activity Update

Agenda Item 7

National Park Authority Board Meeting

13th December 2021

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the Board with an overview of the National Park Authority's COP26 activity and its legacy for our wider Climate and Nature work.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

3. Background

- 3.1. With all eyes on Glasgow as the host city, COP26 offered a platform to demonstrate the role Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park plays in helping Scotland to both achieve its Net Zero ambitions and to protect and restore nature at scale.
- 3.2. Whilst not an end in itself, COP26 provided a launchpad for us to broaden our conversations and communications to lead into longer term Mission Zero, Future Nature and wider climate and nature activity.
- 3.3. When developing our plan, we were clear that the work put into COP26 had to deliver impact way beyond the event itself: it had to help us tell our story longer term, help bring partners on board and provide a catalyst for action.

3.4. While this report will provide celebrate some highlights from the two-week period around COP26 and some metrics around these, they are not the real measure of success. As the urgency of the climate emergency becomes ever more apparent and momentum for action gathers on the equally important nature crisis, our COP26 activity signals the start of something far bigger, far more challenging to achieve and ultimately far more important if our Future Nature, Mission Zero and ambitions for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park to be a Net Zero, nature-rich place are to be realised.

4. COP26: what we set out to do

4.1. Anticipating a crowded media landscape that would be difficult to cut through, we focused our efforts on three key areas:

4.1.1. Creating **engaging content** to bring the National Park's role in tackling the climate emergency and nature crisis to life.

4.1.2. Providing **interesting voices** to talk with expertise and/or lived experience of the issues faced and opportunities available to make a real difference.

4.1.3. Developing and promoting **educational materials and opportunities** that bring the topics to life.

4.2. While we knew we would receive speculative approaches for help or to showcase the National Park, for our proactive activity, we kept our eyes firmly focused on areas where we were confident that we had a unique perspective to share or opportunity to make a difference:

4.2.1. Our **Mission Zero** – what the National Park Authority is doing to meet its commitment to be a Net Zero emitting organisation by 2030.

4.2.2. The role of **nature-based solutions** in tackling the twin crises of climate and nature and how those solutions are being used here in the National Park.

4.2.3. The potential for systems-level change to support **sustainable transport** in a rural environment, to the benefit of visitors, locals and the environment.

4.2.4. The **voices of young people** in calling for climate action and in providing climate leadership.

4.3. We aimed to:

4.3.1. Capture the attention and imagination of policy makers, land managers, investors and partners needed to deliver the scale and pace of change needed.

4.3.2. Demonstrate the important role that this National Park (within its wider family of National Parks and protected areas) plays in tackling the climate emergency and nature crisis, and how the Park Authority itself is finding its own journey to Net Zero.

- 4.3.3. Showcase nature-based solutions in action and provide advocacy for their return on investment for climate, nature, land managers and the people and places affected by climate change.
- 4.3.4. Provide digital and in-person opportunities to for young people, educators and youth leaders to learn more about climate change and the practical action they can take to make a difference.
- 4.3.5. Work collaboratively with public and third sector partners, our sister National Parks and National Parks Partnerships to bring to life a shared narrative about why climate and nature matter and are worth investing in.

5. COP26: what we did

- 5.1. Appendix 1 provides more detail of all activity undertaken and links to coverage. This report will draw attention to key highlights from our COP26 activity, including:
 - 5.1.1. In the COP26 Blue Zone, Catriona Manders from our Youth Committee was invited to speak at and then endorse, by signing, the official launch of the [international joint statement on climate change and biodiversity](#) (which was brought together by James Stuart, our Convener, on behalf of UK National Parks).
 - 5.1.2. We [welcomed US Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, and Michael Matheson](#), Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy & Transport to the National Park where they had the opportunity to hear from and share perspectives from the US National Parks with:
 - 5.1.2.1. Aidan Cronin from our Youth Committee – about the role of young people in taking climate action.
 - 5.1.2.2. David Lowes of Glenfalloch Estates – sharing experience of putting nature-based solutions into action on the Estate;
 - 5.1.2.3. Members of the National Park Executive and Board on the challenges faced in this National Park, and the opportunities for National Parks to act as test beds for putting policy into practice at landscape-scale.
 - 5.1.3. To bring the topics to life, we created short videos on:
 - 5.1.3.1. [Mission Zero](#) – how the National Park Authority plans to be a Net Zero emitting organisation by 2030.
 - 5.1.3.2. [Nature-based solution in action](#) – seeing peatland restoration and woodland regeneration in action and hearing from the land managers who have been involved in projects of this nature in the National Park.
 - 5.1.4. To coincide with ‘Transport day’ at COP26, [The Herald](#) published an opinion piece by Kenny Auld, Head of Visitor Services, looking at the particular issues of

delivering sustainable travel in rural locations and the systems-level shift that is needed to address this to address car-based emissions.

5.1.5. We published blogs from our staff and Youth Committee members online:

5.1.5.1. On the 'Youth and Public Empowerment Day' Youth Committee member Catriona Manders wrote about [why young people deserve to be listened to](#).

5.1.5.2. Stuart Mearns, Director of Place, wrote about [community collaboration on nature and climate](#).

5.1.5.3. Kenny Auld, Head of Visitor Services wrote about the [challenges and opportunities of sustainable transport](#) in rural areas.

5.1.5.4. Youth Committee member, Aidan Cronin, wrote about [how young people can shape the future of protected areas](#).

5.1.6. Charlotte Wallace, our Climate Action Manager, was part of the team hosting COP26 delegates who stopped by the 'bonsai landscape' exhibition within the Blue Zone at COP26, offering opportunities for conversations about nature-based solutions, opportunities for young people and our own Mission Zero journey.

5.1.7. Members of our Executive team spoke at, hosted or took part in panel discussions at a range of events during COP26:

5.1.7.1. Global Ethical Finance Initiative (GEFI) '[Finance for nature, in nature](#)' event – Gordon Watson, our CEO, spoke about the role of peatland restoration as a nature-based solution worth investing in to tackle climate change.

5.1.7.2. Accenture event '[Net Zero with Nature](#): How National Parks can drive UK Nature-based Solutions' – Gordon took part in a panel discussion making the case for investing in nature.

5.1.7.3. Design Council's '[Design for Planet](#)' festival - Simon Jones, Director of Environment & Visitor Services, spoke on the potential for designers of all disciplines to make the systems-level change that is needed to shift how we value nature and actively regenerate it for the future.

5.1.8. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) held their seminar on '[Rural Regions: Realising the net-zero opportunity](#)' at our Balloch headquarters during COP26, providing an opportunity to showcase the National Park to a range of international government officials, Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, and business leaders. Gordon Watson, opened the event, providing a welcome and introduction to Scotland's first National Park.

5.1.9. We updated our website [homepage](#), [climate-related content](#) and suite of [educational materials about the climate emergency and biodiversity](#). These

were promoted during COP26 including Board Member, Heather Reid, who shared these resources during the COP26-related events she was hosting or speaking at. At one of these events Charlotte Wallace, Climate Action Manager, delivered a workshop on the [Mission Zero case study](#).

5.1.10. We prepared a climate and nature focused programme of social media content to run throughout COP26 on our key channels (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram). During this period the number of our followers, the reach and impressions (number of times our posts are seen) and engagement on our posts all increased. On Twitter, our priority channel, our COP26 posts had nearly 211,000 impressions.

5.1.11. To keep staff, Board and wider stakeholders updated throughout COP26, we:

5.1.11.1. Refreshed our Climate Hub on our staff intranet, bring all climate-related staff content together in one place, making it easier to access and engage with.

5.1.11.2. Ran a series of Lunch & Learn sessions where staff could find out more about what a 'COP' is and what we are doing to tackle the climate and nature crises here in this National Park.

5.1.11.3. Issued a series of tailored updates throughout COP26 to keep key stakeholders updated on our activity.

6. Legacy impact – what next?

6.1. After taking some well-earned post-COP26 time away, the staff involved are currently capturing our learning from all this activity, what worked well, what we would do differently next time and how we build on the momentum that was gathered. Immediate reflections from key staff involved are captured in [this short video](#).

6.2. We should rightly feel proud of the activity we created and were involved in during COP26, but as set out in 3.4 above, this activity was never just about COP26 itself. It has to lead to something far more enduring, a shift in focus and emphasis, for us and the partners whose help we need to deliver a nature-rich, climate-positive National Park.

6.3. The event in November signals the start of the year-long UK Presidency of COP, and with [COP15](#) (the UN biodiversity conference) due to take place in April/May 2022, the time is right for organisations and places like ours to continue to push the need for urgent action, leading the way ourselves and bringing partners to the table whose help is needed to deliver the scale of change that is needed on both climate and nature.

6.4. COP26 has galvanised our staff; given us opportunities to make the case for climate action and nature restoration; brought us together with other international protected areas and organisations looking to invest, and provided a platform for voices from young people to be heard but we cannot stop here.

Over the coming weeks and months, as we finalise our review of COP26, bring more partners on board with Future Nature, get a baseline for the carbon emissions of the National Park that need to be addressed, and begin developing our next National Park Partnership Plan, we will use the momentum to develop an action plan that brings this work together, to ensure that what we did and learned during COP26 has a legacy well beyond the event itself.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Detailed activity overview

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