



Draft minutes of meeting held at 10am on 13th December 2021 – Live Webcast

Agenda Item 3

National Park Authority Board Meeting 13th December 2021

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Present
James Stuart (Convener)
Heather Reid (HR)

Bob Darracott (BD)
Martin Earl (ME)
Danny Gibson (DG)
Ronnie Erskine (RE)
William Nisbet (WN) (Depute Convener)
Billy Ronald (BR)
David McCowan (DMcC)
Claire Chapman (CC)
Alistair Berrill (AB)
Sarah Drummond (SD)
Christopher Spray (CS)
Iain Shonny Paterson (ISP)

Apologies
Bobby Good
Diane Docherty

In Attendance - National Park Authority Staff
Gordon Watson (GW), Chief Executive Officer
Pete Wightman (PW), Director of Corporate Services
Stuart Mearns (SM), Director of Place
Simon Jones (SJ), Director of Environment and Visitor Services
Anna MacLean (AMac), Director of Engagement & Innovation
Douglas Smith (DS), Board & Committee Manager & Proper Officer
Jane Cook (JC), Executive & Business Support Manager & Moderator
Margaret Gallacher (MG), Minute Clerk
Joanne Ford (JF), Communications Manager & Youth Committee Members – Agenda item 7
Alan Bell (ABell), Natural Heritage Programme Manager – Agenda items 8 and 11
Eilidh McKerry (EMcK), Financial & Performance Manager – Agenda item 10
Kenny Auld (KA), Head of Visitor Services – Agenda item 12a
Deborah Sandals (DS), Place Projects Manager – Agenda item 12b

Items and Actions
Session 1: 10:00am – 11:30am
<u>Item 1: Welcome and Apologies</u>
The Convener opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees to the virtual meeting of the National Park Authority Board.
This meeting was originally planned to be in person, but following a number of concerns about the new variant of COVID, and with the change in messaging from the Scottish Government around travel, self-isolation, testing and working from home, the Convenor decided to move the meeting online to ensure we are able to remain quorate and to reduce risk to health.

Items and Actions

The meeting was able to take place in this format as a result of:

- Board Standing Order 25 which permits participation by Members at board meetings to be either in person or by video or audio link

As with previous meetings throughout the pandemic, this meeting was available for members of the public to view via a livestream on our website. Additionally, we provided access to a livestream at National Park Headquarters in Balloch for anyone who may have otherwise been unable to view proceedings online.

The Convener welcomed any members of the public and the Youth Committee viewing this meeting online.

The Convener then asked Board members and National Park staff participating in the meeting to introduce themselves.

Apologies have been received from Bobby Good and Diane Docherty.

JS advised he is the Convener and Chair of this meeting, WN is the Vice-Convener, GW is CEO and DS is Proper Officer.

Item 2: Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were noted.

Item 3: Minutes of Meeting held on 13th September 2021

The minutes were proposed by CC and seconded by CS.

DECISION: Members agreed to approve the minutes with the exception of ISP who was not in attendance at the meeting.

Item 4: Matters Arising

PW introduced the matters arising which have all been completed.

DECISION: Members agreed to note the report.

Item 5: Committee Membership Update

The paper was introduced by DS to approve an appointment of a Board Member to the Planning & Access Committee due to a vacancy.

DECISION: Members agreed to approve the appointment of Alistair Berrill as a member of the Planning & Access Committee.

Item 6: Our Next National Park Partnership Plan

Items and Actions

The paper was introduced by GW. Discussion and questions from Members followed.

DECISION: Members agreed to

1. Agree to commence work on a new National Park Partnership Plan for 2024-2029 through the formation of a sub-group of Board members, officers and, where appropriate, co-opted members to establish the process for engagement, agree the work programme and guide the development of the Plan.
2. Agree that this group should be Co-Chaired by Sarah Drummond and Chris Spray, with potential for two further Board members to become members of this group.
3. Agree to the group co-opting members who can help bring less heard perspectives to the Plan's development and creation, ensuring we have broader diversity of input and that our steering group's work is advised by areas of expertise not within the organisation.
4. Agree to the draft Terms of Reference for the group set out in Appendix 1, as amended for typos.
5. Note that the full Board will be provided with updates, including timelines and draft documents for consultation.

DG left the meeting due to a technical issue.

Item 7: COP26 Activity Update

The paper was introduced by AMac and videos were shown from Aidan Cronin and Catriona Manders of the Youth Committee who were involved in the COP26 activity.

The Convener has written to thank both of them for all the work they did during the event.

AMac also recorded her thanks to them for taking the time to make the videos.

There followed discussion and questions by Members.

ACTION: Staff to consider how to report to the Board on follow-up actions arising from COP26.

DECISION: Members agreed to note the contents of the report.

Comfort break – 11:30am – 11:45 am

Session 2: 11:45 am – 12:45pm

DG re-joined the meeting and ISP joined the meeting.

Items and Actions

Item 8: CEO Report

The paper was introduced by GW. Discussion and questions from Members followed.

DECISION: Members agreed to note the report.

Item 9: 2021/22 Annual Operating Plan Progress Report

The paper was introduced by PW. There followed discussion and questions by Members.

Following a question by ME about motorhome facilities, it was agreed this would be discussed offline.

Action: SJ to ask KA to contact ME to discuss this further.

BD asked about the plan to introduce car park charging at Tarbet and whether there was an updated timeline or other information to share with the community. PW responded that the Executive will be considering this before Christmas and will update stakeholders on plans following that discussion.

Action: PW to update stakeholders following discussion with the Executive.

DECISION: Members agreed to note the contents of the report.

Item 10: Financial Report

The paper was introduced by PW and EMcK. There followed discussion and questions by Members.

DECISION: Members agreed to note this report, the Management Accounts as at 30th September 2021 (Appendix 1) and the updated 21/22 budget – Q2 Budget Revision (Appendix 2).

Lunch – 12:45pm – 1:30pm

Session 3: 1:30pm – 3pm

Deputation

Item 11: A82 Upgrade – Tarbet to Invernarnan (deputation from Helensburgh & District Access Trust)

In line with the Board Standing Orders 38-41, in advance of this meeting a request to hear a deputation from Helensburgh and District Access Trust on the A82 upgrade between Tarbet and Invernarnan was received. The Convener agreed that the Board should hear the deputation. Members received a copy of the Access Trust's submission and the CEO Update included relevant context.

John Urquhart, Jack Fordy and Stewart Gibb from the Access Trust attended the meeting to discuss their alternative proposal with Board Members.

Items and Actions

There followed questions and discussion between the Access Trust representatives and Board Members.

JS clarified that the National Park Authority is a statutory consultee but the A82 upgrade is Transport Scotland's proposal.

GW advised it is a work in progress, not the final design, and as Transport Scotland moves towards the formal process, it will be discussed further by the Board in terms of climate and nature. There will be more discussions in the coming months before Transport Scotland reach the point where the design will become the final proposal and Board Members will be kept up to date during this process.

The Convener thanked the Trust for sharing their proposals with the Board and suggested there may be other avenues they could consider to communicate their proposals to other consultees.

Item 12: Visitor Management – a) 2021 Season Report and b) Place Investment Programme

Season Report

The paper was introduced by SJ. It has been a very challenging season that involved a massive team effort, both internally and externally, and he wanted to record his thanks to everyone involved.

KA then discussed some highlights from the report.

Place Investment Programme

The paper was introduced by SM.

There followed discussion and questions by Members.

BD mentioned the motorhome activity on Forestry Land Scotland (FLS) land at Ardentinny and asked if we can influence FLS to manage that property. KA will be having regular meetings with FLS over the winter and will raise this with them.

Action: KA to add the land at Ardentinny to the agenda for the next meeting with FLS.

DECISION: Members agreed to note the contents of this paper and associated appendices.

Item 13: Any Other Business

With the emerging COVID situation, GW advised that he sent out an email to all staff last week to let them know that we are pausing our phased return to work. Staff will still be in the building but only for essential and wellbeing purposes. There will also

Items and Actions

be a reduction in non-essential in-person meetings and the situation will be monitored continuously.

Item 14: Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Board meeting will be Monday 14th March 2022. It is intended that this will be in person but we will follow the rules in place at that time.

The Convener closed the meeting by thanking everyone for the significant amount of work that has been done this year and hopes that everyone has a good holiday break.

Signed

James Stuart, Convener