



Corporate Focus – Health & Safety

Agenda Item 11

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Monday 14th March 2022

Paper for information

1. Purpose.....	1
2. Recommendation	1
3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan.....	1
4. Background.....	2
5. Key Health & Safety progress in 2021/22	2
6. Health and Safety Training.....	4
7. Reporting of Accidents/Incidents/Near Misses/Hazards.....	4
8. Risks & Next Steps for 2022/23	6
9. Conclusion	7

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper provides our 2021/22 annual update to the Board on Health and Safety. It outlines our continued response to the pandemic, our progress in reducing identified Health and Safety risk, and highlights priorities for the coming year.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. We recommend that the Board notes the content of this report.

3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan

- 3.1. This paper contributes to Our 5-year (Corporate) Plan through our commitment to invest in our staff as well as focusing on continued improvement of our systems and processes to ensure compliance with Health and Safety.

4. Background

4.1. Our Health and Safety Policy clearly sets out organisational responsibilities. The CEO has overall accountability. The Board's responsibilities are:

- 4.1.1. Assure itself that there is a written Health and Safety policy, in which management responsibility for health and safety is clearly allocated at all levels
- 4.1.2. Receive and consider health and safety reports enabling evaluation and monitoring of the health and safety performance of the National Park Authority
- 4.1.3. Review significant risks faced by the National Park Authority
- 4.1.4. Adopt a scrutiniser role to ensure that the National Park Authority continually develops and improves the Safety Management System

5. Key Health & Safety progress in 2021/22

- 5.1. The biggest Health & Safety risk of 2021/22 for the organisation continued to be the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-safe working and COVID safety measures continued to be ever changing as restrictions eased. We turned our focus to what a return to the workplace would look like and supporting staff to embrace the change that we knew was ahead of us. Alongside this we also progressed compliance in other areas as and when we were able to.
- 5.2. The following summarises the key actions we took as the COVID pandemic continued as well as the progress made in relation to the key priorities we had set for 2021/22.

COVID

- Staff Communications

Communication became even more important as the pandemic continued. Regular communication was critical so we encouraged in person meetings when allowed, all staff virtual meetings and the investment in Office 365 and access to Teams made a huge difference on the ability to communicate with colleagues with ease. We regularly communicated COVID safety measures to all staff, using a variety of tools including all staff emails, fortnightly staff newsletters, slots at our all staff 10:02 meeting, signage in buildings, posts on our Park Central intranet, in individual team meetings, and as a regular discussion item at our Health and Safety Committee.

- Procedures

Our Operational Guidance for working during COVID was reviewed and updated during the year as Scottish Government guidance for workplaces and sectors evolved. We also developed and implemented procedures to follow when a positive case is confirmed at one of our workplaces. Over the course of 2021/22 this was activated twice.

COVID Audits were carried out prior to our Phase 1 return to the office on all of our staffed premises by an external organisation to ensure our working practices and buildings were compliant with the regulations and guidance. Several recommendations were made which were all fully implemented.

- Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing continues to be our number one priority, regular wellbeing initiatives including Resilience and Embracing Change training was available to all staff.

- New Ways of Working

As time moved on it became clear that we were working towards a new way of working. We started Phase I (interim changes) towards the end of 2021 that allowed a gradual/restricted return to the office and following a staff survey we will move to Phase 2 (hybrid working model) on the 1st March 2022.

2021/22 outcomes/priorities

The previous annual report to the Board in March 2021 set out a number of focus areas for the year. Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic we still made progress on a number of non-COVID related items:

- Significant process continues to be made with the review and development of H&S policies:-
 - Health & Safety Policy
 - Infection at Work
 - Manual Handling
 - PUWER/LOLER
- The following policies are under development and will be implemented by the end of the 2021/22
 - Contractor Management
 - Event Management
 - Water Safety Policy
- The development of site and visitor risk assessments is ongoing. Phase 1 sites (Loch Lomond) are nearing the final stage of review and work has begun on phase 2 (sites out with Loch Lomond). Depending on resource and capacity the aim is to have them all completed by June 2022. An action plan has also been implemented for our organisational risk assessments which is underway and has a completion date of July 2022.

- Prior to the pandemic SEPA provided us with lone working safety cover, but with the onset of COVID they were unable to continue this. As a result we brought the service in house, but this was always only as a temporary measure as it is not sustainable under our existing staffing. Following a successful trial we have now procured the services of Vodafone/ORBIS for a new digital lone working safety cover service that primarily works off of a mobile phone app (with alternative options also available) and will be in place early in the season.
- We have procured Cardinus DSE software that will support our DSE compliance and enhance individual work station layouts and working habits as we move towards our hybrid working model.

6. Health and Safety Training

- 6.1. Due to the pandemic there is still some limitations on access to training although this improved as restrictions eased and we have made good progress to ensure staff are up to date with safe working practices along with some training to support staff wellbeing.

Course Title	Number Attended
Bushcraft	6
Lantra Hedge Cutter	4
Lantra Cross Chipper course	3
CITB Operatives & Specialists HS&E Test App	2
Lantra Novice Tractor and refresher	3
Cable Avoidance	7
IPAF MEWP 1b	4
IPAF MEWP Course (3a & 3b novice)	4
MEWPS for Managers	1
IPAF Harness Course	4
Signing, lighting & guarding course	8
Plant & vehicle Marshall course	4
Plant Operator Forward Tipping dumper	2
Plants Ops 360 Excavator	2
x B+E Trailer Driving	2
Abrasive Wheels	4
Sharps	12
First Aid	18
Building Resilience	86

7. Reporting of Accidents/Incidents/Near Misses/Hazards

Accident, incident, near miss and hazard (AINH) reporting has improved on 2020/21 as a result of more in person working and staff's heightened awareness around safety and the importance of reporting. We have highlighted this through the staff bulletin and other initiatives to engage staff in the process.

Year	AINH Reports
2018/19	138
2019/20	127
2020/21	11
2021/22 (10 months)	40

7.1. The table below details the number of Accidents/Incidents/Near Misses and Hazards reported until the end of January 2022 as well as the total number reported for 2020/21.¹

Category	2020/21	2021/22 (10 months)
Accident	3	8
Incident	5	17
Near Miss	2	13
Hazard	0	1
RIDDOR Reportable	1	1
Total	11	40

7.2. The RIDDOR reportable entry for 2021/22 involved a member of staff attending hospital after an accident. At present we only have 1 AINH still open for 2021/22. The highest number of reports have been reported in the following categories:-

Category	2021/22	Comment
Animal bite/injury	8	We continue to raise awareness and confirm that all staff who are bitten have received the tick tool box talk. A 'Ticks on Tour' awareness message was also developed to reinforce the value of reporting tick bites.

¹ **Incident:** An unplanned, undesired event that may cause injury, illness or property damage or some combination of all three. Unplanned and undesired do not mean unable to prevent; these events should have been foreseeable and as such proper planning and assessment should have prevented the incident.

Accident: Similar to incident however not foreseeable; despite effective planning and assessment the accident occurred.

Near Miss: An event that, while not causing harm, has the potential to cause injury, ill health or property damage.

Hazard: An object, situation or behaviour that has the potential to cause injury, illness or property damage.

RIDDOR Reportable: are those that require a report to be submitted to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The RIDDOR reportable entry in 2020/21 is due to a member of the public attending hospital after an accident.

Acts of Violence/ Aggression	7	Unfortunately our staff do experience acts of violence and aggression. We are grateful that the police have been responsive and assisted when requested. Reporting of incidents was raised at the daily Ranger Service briefings and it also formed part of the end of season debrief. The outcome from this was that we will do a light touch campaign throughout the coming season to remind the public to respect our staff.
Vehicle/Road Traffic Accident	6	A few incidents involved our electric fleet as they are being used more often than before and staff are still getting used to them. This includes near misses of staff nearly becoming stranded on a low charge. Our Facilities team have reinforced the need to carry out checks prior to departure and familiarise yourself with the vehicle before starting your journey.

8. Risks & Next Steps for 2022/23

- 8.1. Alongside our continued response to the pandemic we currently consider the following to be our top health and safety priorities that we want to make progress against in 2022/23:

Focus	Action
Focused Audits	Over the past couple of years we have made significant progress with the development of policies and procedures for a wide range of activities to ensure safe methods of working. We now plan to carry out a series of focused audits that will help us ensure that staff across the organisation are implementing these effectively and consistently.
Safety Training recording	We launched a new HR system early in 2022 and we will be developing it through the year so that we have timely and accurate recording and reporting for all safety critical posts to ensure compliance with statutory and best practice requirements. In addition to this we will review our general H&S induction to ensure that it is still fit for purpose for our new ways of working.
Risk Assessment Review	We will continue with our action plan to review and develop all categories of risk assessment aiming for a full suite of up to date and fit for purpose risk assessments.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1. Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic we have continued to make progress on the health and safety outcomes we set for 2021/22. This has included the development of a number of additional health and safety policies, progress on updating all categories of risk assessments, systems that support our DSE and lone working requirements. As we begin to understand what living with COVID means for us this will remain a priority alongside the other health and safety priorities we have identified.

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