

Draft minutes of meeting held on 13 March 2023

Agenda Item 3

National Park Authority Board Meeting
12 June 2023

Paper for approval

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Present

Heather Reid (Convenor) (HR)
Martin Earl (ME)
Sarah Drummond (SD)
David Fettes (DF)
Christopher Spray (CS)
Maurice Corry (MC)
William Sinclair (WS)
Gerry McGarvey (GM) (until Item 13)
Rhona Brock (RB)
Sid Perrie (SP)
Richard Johnson (RJ)

Apologies

Ronnie Erskine
David Mackie
Claire Chapman
Zain Sehgal
Iain Shonny Patterson
Hazel Sorrell

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 (AM), Director of Engagement & Innovation
Dougie Smith (DS), Board & Committee Manager & Proper Officer
Samantha Stubbs (SS), Corporate Performance Manager & Minute Clerk
Aidan Cronin (AC), Youth Committee
Kenny Auld (KA), Head of Visitor Services (from Item 5 until Item 12)
Susan Brooks, Communities and Place Planning Manager (Item 5)
Joanne Ford (JF), Communications Team Manager (Item 5)
Eilidh McKerry (EM), Finance Manager (Items 6 & 9)
Stuart Goudie (SG), Health and Safety Officer (Item 12)
Dominic Hall (DH), Future Nature Manager (Item 13)

Items and Actions

Item 1: Welcome and Apologies

The Convener opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees. She advised that this meeting, as well as being physically accessible to members of the public today, is available to view via a livestream on our website.

HR reminded all Members to speak clearly into the microphones provided and not to speak over each other so that those following online are able to follow proceedings with clarity.

The Convenor welcomed all members of the public observing today's meeting.

HR asked the Members and National Park representatives participating in this meeting to introduce themselves.

Item 2: Declarations of Interest

CS declared his involvement with the Countryside Trust. This does not affect participation in any Items at this meeting.

Item 3: Minutes of the Special Board Meeting held on 30 January 2023

Minutes updated to show that CS and HS were in attendance. There were no other comments on, or amendments to, the minutes.

The minutes were proposed by SD and seconded by GM. The minutes were approved by Members present.

DECISION: The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 30 January 2023 were approved by majority vote.

Items and Actions

Item 4: Matters Arising

PW introduced the matters arising.

Some feedback has been received from Board Members in relation to Board email addresses. Decision made to continue with the current approach, with clarifications on the website around how to contact Board Members and how members of the public can make contributions to planning cases via the Planning Portal.

Email addresses to be created for Chair of Planning and Access Committee, Chair of Audit and Risk Committee and Convenor which will be publicised on the Park Authority's website.

No further comments were received.

DECISION: Members agreed to **note** the report.

Item 5: National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 Draft

The paper was introduced by SD and CS. SD set the context of the NPPP Draft Plan in terms of the operating environment. SD thanked all staff involved in drafting the plan. CS shared that the width of topics covered within the NPPP has been appreciated by stakeholders with whom conversations and meetings have occurred.

Content of the paper was covered by GW and AM using slides. Discussion and questions from Members followed, focused around four discussion areas:

Process and Principles

Topics covered included:

- Aim 4's (specifically housing) role in the draft plan.
- Flexibility of the draft plan should the operating environment require it.
- Partnership working and ensuring that key delivery partners bring their knowledge and skills to the partnership.
- Green Jobs and the Green Economy.
- Young People's engagement with the National Park, including appropriate provision for training, education and apprenticeships.
- Local Authorities, Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Water and NatureScot were identified as key partners to enabling the success of the plan.
- Requirement to be innovative, including within our approach to partnership working.

Items and Actions

- Visitor engagement in relation to the draft plan, including the role of Rangers.

These will be explored further within the consultation process and AM encouraged all members to share the discussions with their networks.

Restoring Nature

Topics covered included:

- The processes for restoring natural ecosystems.
- How we work with nature restoration bodies

Creating a sustainable, low carbon destination

Topics covered included:

- Sustainable travel and the need to create sustainable, joined up journeys across the National Park, linking to the work undertaken by the Futures Group.
- Recognition that a large volume of emissions come from leisure journeys and the need to address this with partners.
- The benefits and challenges of developing sustainable transport models within the National Park.

Enabling a greener economy and sustainable living

Topics covered included:

- Housing requirements within the National Park, highlighting the minimum numbers of affordable housing, which links to the Fourth National Planning Framework.
- Requirement to look at the housing system holistically to address issues in relation to affordable housing.
- Vacant and derelict land being brought back into use within communities.
- Signalling the approach taken within the Local Development Plan to align homes with where they are required and interventions that might be required.
- The National Park Authority's role at the forefront of climate and nature work.

Next steps

Topics covered included:

- Consideration of how to engage with a diverse range of consultees.
- The use of public meetings within the consultation.
- Length of consultation (twelve weeks)
- Thanks to all staff involved in the development of the plan, given the significant amount of work that has been undertaken.

Items and Actions

DECISION: Members agreed to:

- **Approve** the **Draft** National Park Partnership Plan attached as Appendix 1 for the purposes of a formal 12-week consultation commencing in April 2023.
- **Agree** to delegate final editorial adjustments and document and engagement design to officers.
- **Note** that final arrangements for carrying out wide ranging consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the wider public are being finalised and will be subject to further Board briefing prior to the launch of the consultation.

Item 6: 2023/24 Budget and Annual Operating Plan

EM joined the meeting remotely.

The paper was introduced by PW, SS and EM.

The following topics were discussed:

- Contingencies within the plan and budget.
- Reduction in seasonal staffing and the causes.
- Staffing pay projection and guidance from Scottish Government in relation to the pay award.
- Success criteria within the AOP Deliverables and how this is measured and reported.
- Additional Visitor Management funding.

ACTION: Deliverable to be added under theme two to include Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Design studies. [SS]

DECISION: Members agreed to

- **Approve** the Annual Operational Plan for 2023/24
- **Approve** the proposed budget for 2023/24

Item 7: Board Schedule 2024 and 2025

The paper was introduced by DS. A brief discussion around approach to hybrid meetings occurred.

DECISION: Members agreed to

- **Review and approve** the provisional schedules of meeting dates for the National Park Authority Board, Committees and Groups for 2024 and 2025
- **Note** the approach to remote attendance/hybrid meetings as outlines at 5.1 to 5.5

Items and Actions

Item 8: 2022/23 Annual Operational Plan Progress Report

The paper was introduced by PW and SS.

The following topics were discussed:

- Shuttle Bus; cancelled for the 2022/23 year.
- Estates Database to support asset management.
- Estates Strategy will be coming to June 2023 Board

Decision: Members agreed to **Note** the contents of the report.

Item 9: Finance Update

The paper was introduced by PW and EM.

HR noted the Board's thanks to EM as she is leaving the organisation at the end of the month.

DECISION: Members agreed to **note** the report and the Management Accounts for the period ended 31 December 2022.

Item 10: Convenor Report

Verbal update presented by HR. Topics of discussion included:

- 1:1 meetings with Board Members.
- Ongoing Board Induction.
- Ministerial Appointment Update.

DECISION: Members agreed to **note** the update provided by the Convenor.

Item 11: CEO Report

The paper was presented by GW. The following topics were discussed:

- Vacant National Park Asset in Luss.
- CivTech and engagement with Local Authorities.

ACTION: Relevant example CivTech data to be available during the Board's scheduled visit to Conic Hill in April. [KA]

DECISION: Members agreed to **note** this report.

Item 12: Annual Health and Safety Update

The paper was introduced by PW and SG. The following topics were discussed:

- Mental Health First Aid – to be addressed in future reports.

Items and Actions

- Drop in 'near miss' recording for 2022/23 in comparison to 2021/22.
- Severity of incidents and follow up actions.
- Information on AED availability for staff.

DECISION: Members agreed **to note** the report.

Item 13: Future Nature Update

The paper was introduced by CS, SJ and DH. The following topics were discussed:

- Volunteering for Nature and Citizen Science projects
- Impacts of landscape-scale change
- National Parks as areas to trial new approaches to land management.

GM left the meeting.

DECISION: Members agreed to:

- **Note** the progress to date.
- **Suggest** any relevant opportunities and channels for wider dissemination and engagement of partners and local communities that members feel they may be able to assist with.

Item 14: Committee and Group Highlights

Planning and Access

WS verbally updated the Board on recent meetings. Topics included:

- Cononish Gold Mine Updates
- National Planning Framework 4 Training
- DPEA Appeal for Loch Long Salmon application
- Local Review Bodies Training

Audit and Risk Committee

CS verbally updated the Board on recent meetings. Topic included:

- Internal and External Audit Reports
- Cyber Resilience
- Internal Audit Plan 2023/24

Futures Group

SD verbally updated the Board on the proposed schedule of Futures Group.

- 10th May: 10am to 1pm, Balloch HQ, in person.
- 23rd August: 2pm to 5pm, TBC.

Countryside Trust

CS verbally updated the Board on the Countryside Trust developments:

- Strategy day
- Wild Strathfillan project
- Project Coordinator for The Great Trossachs Forest project
- Walk in the Park

Items and Actions

- Active Travel

ACTION: DS to look at Countryside Trust session being included in upcoming Board Meeting, Strategy Day OR Board Training Schedule

Youth Committee

AC verbally updated the Board on the work of the Youth Committee and his placement with the organisation:

- Youth Committee to approve draft letter to Lorna Slater and Scottish Government in relation to Green Skills
- National Parks UK Learning and Engagement Team hosted sessions focused on sharing best practise around the UK. Two members attended.
- Discussion with Executive Team around placement and development of the Youth Committee
- AC's placement has included Place Projects Team and Planning NPF4 training.
- Demographics and geographic spread of youth committee members.

HR thanked AC for the work undertaken on his placement, and across the wider organisation, to ensure the voices of Young People are heard. HR also thanked the Youth Committee for their continued hard work and support.

Item 15: AOB

None.

Item 16: Date of Next Meeting

Monday 12 June 2023, National Park Headquarters, Balloch.

Board Training Day: 28th March 2023; focus on Communities, Stakeholders and Tourism.

Signed

Heather Reid, Convener