

# Draft minutes of meeting held on 9 December 2024

## Agenda Item 3

**National Park Authority Board Meeting**  
10 March 2025

Paper for approval

### Contents

<b>Present</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Apologies</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>In Attendance - National Park Authority Staff</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Items and Actions</b> .....	<b>2</b>

<b>Present</b>
Heather Reid (Convenor) (HR)
Hazel Sorrell (HS) (up to Item 9)
Maurice Corry (MC)
William Sinclair (WS)
Colin Lee (CL)
Sid Perrie (SP) (up to Item 6)
Richard Johnson (RJ)
Ronnie Erskine (RE)
David Mackie (DM)
Navid Foroutan (NF)
Martin Earl (Depute Convener) (ME)
Claire Chapman (CC)
Christopher Spray (CS)
Iain Shonny Patterson (ISP) (up to Item 9)
Gerry McGarvey (GM)

<b>Apologies</b>
Rhona Brock (RB)
David Fettes (DF)
Sarah Drummond (SD)

**In Attendance - National Park Authority Staff**

Gordon Watson (GW), Chief Executive Officer

Stuart Mearns (SM), Director of Place

Anna McLean (AM), Director of Engagement and Innovation

Simon Jones (SJ), Director of Environment and Visitor Services

Dougie Smith (DS), Corporate Performance Manager & Proper Officer

Ayeasha Temple (AT) Business Support (Minute Taker)

Jane Kemp (JK), Head of Governance and Performance

Kenny Auld (KA), Head of Visitor Services

Sam Stubbs (SS), Head of People and Assets

Alan Bell (AB), Natural Heritage Programme manager

Dom Hall (DH), Future Nature Development Manager

Lucy Allan (LA) Youth Committee

**Items and Actions****Item 1: Welcome and Apologies**

The Convenor opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Headquarters in Balloch.

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 the members of the public observing the meeting online through a livestream on our website.

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

Apologies were received from Sarah Drummond, Rhona Brock and David Fettes.

HR restated the Board's commitment to ethical standards in public life and highlighted Members' responsibilities under the Code of Conduct, emphasising section 3 on bullying and harassment and the Convenor's role in upholding those responsibilities.

**Item 2: Declarations of Interest**

CS mentioned his role as a Board Member at Environmental Standards Scotland, which is listed in his register of interests, in relation to the organisation's work regarding the Natural Environment Bill and Biodiversity Strategy. There is no conflict arising from this declaration for any of the items on the agenda for this meeting.

Items and Actions
<p><b>Item 3: Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 30 September 2024</b></p> <p>SP sought clarification on the role of National Planning Framework 4, the Local Development Plan and Local Place Plans in planning decisions, as discussed and minuted under Agenda Item 8 of the meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September</p> <p>SM clarified the status of National Planning Framework 4, the Local Development Plan and Local Place Plans in relation to planning decisions made by the National Park Authority.</p> <p>The minutes were proposed by CC and seconded by RJ. The minutes were approved by Members present.</p> <p><b>DECISION:</b> The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 30 September 2024 were approved by majority vote.</p>
<p><b>Item 4: Matters Arising</b></p> <p>DS presented the paper.</p> <p>DS confirmed that all matters are now complete and closed.</p> <p>CS gave an update from the SEPA meeting on water bodies clarification.</p> <p><b>DECISION:</b> Members agreed to <b>note</b> the report.</p>
<p><b>Item 5: Committee Membership and Committee Leadership Elections</b></p> <p>DS presented the paper and gave an update on amendments made to the current membership.</p> <p>Members held an election consisting of Richard Johnson and William Sinclair under Standing Orders 16(a-e) for the role of Depute Chair of Planning and Access Committee.</p> <p>After a short statement from both members, the successful candidate RJ will now take the role with immediate effect to December 2026.</p> <p>The paper was proposed by GM and seconded by ISP</p> <p>Members <b>approved</b> each of the appointments set out in the table at 2.5, for which each received one nomination only, adding the following position:</p> <p>Depute Chair of Audit and Risk Committee – DM</p>

## Items and Actions

Members **approved** the Committee and Group membership set out at 2.3, with immediate effect until December 2026, with the following amendment:

Futures Group – GM added, and CL removed

Member **noted** the membership of the Chairs and Executive Group, as set out in its terms of reference, includes the Convener, Depute Convener, Chairs of each Committee and Group, and the Executive Team.

### Item 6: Corporate Plan 2025-2030

AM introduced the paper and gave a short presentation on the following areas:

- Overview of the Corporate Plan
- emergent themes, Our Approach, Our People and Our System
- NP Aims
- Purpose and Vision
- Editing minor changes
- Feedback from workshops
- Vision for 2025
- Risks
- Next Steps

DH discussed the main areas of focus in the Corporate Plan and the 3 objectives.

Discussion and questions from Members followed. The discussion focused on:

- How the plan links to Net Zero targets
- How the National Park Authority can showcase success
- Grants and Funding
- At a glance version of the Corporate Plan
- Changes resulting from the Natural Environment Bill
- Trends and work development
- Use of AI technology

## Items and Actions

- Commercial and business opportunities
- Digital Strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

**ACTION:** Summary version of Corporate Plan to be produced as part of the final design process [AM]

**ACTION:** CL to review amendments relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as part of the input from Chairs and Executive Group's input to the final draft

ME proposed the motion, seconded by DM.

**DECISION:** Members **agreed** to review and approve the draft Corporate Plan as attached at Appendix 1 for submission to Scottish Ministers.

Members **agreed** to delegate final minor editorial adjustments and final design of the document to staff, with input from the Chairs and Executive Group, ahead of submission to Scottish Ministers.

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HR thanked NF for his time and input during his participation in the Boardroom Apprentice programme.

NF thanked all members for their support and advised he has secured a full time Board position on a third sector board as a result of his experience with the NPA.

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SP left the meeting 11:30

## Item 7: Convener's Report

HR made a verbal report to the Board, including updates on:

- 10:02 Meeting
- East of Loch Lomond Visit
- Update on the UK Chairs and Executive Forum
- Scottish Government Meetings

GW gave an update for Members following the Scottish Government Budget of the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024, highlighting a relatively positive outcome for the National Park

<b>Items and Actions</b>
Authority and advising that the internal budget process for 2025/26 is progressing positively.
<b>Item 8: Strategic Estates Update</b>
SS provided Board Members with an update on current strategic estates matters in relation to progress against these historic board decisions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Estates Strategy</li><li>• Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway Car Parks Transfer</li><li>• Former Visitor Centre in Luss</li><li>• Gateway Centre</li></ul> Discussion and questions from Members followed. The discussion focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confirmation on processes undertaken</li><li>• Luss parking problems</li><li>• Tarbet pier and ongoing discussions with businesses</li><li>• Challenges with Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway</li><li>• Community Asset Transfers process</li></ul> <b>DECISION:</b> Members <b>noted</b> the Strategic Estates Update.
<b>Item 9: CEO Report</b>
GW presented the paper to Members and provided updates on significant organisational developments, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consultation on a new National Park for Galloway</li><li>• Natural Environment Bill</li><li>• Visit by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport</li><li>• End of Season Report</li><li>• A83 (Rest and Be Thankful) Update</li><li>• Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill Update</li><li>• West Highland Way Trust</li></ul>

## Items and Actions

- Cononish Goldmine

Discussion and questions from Members followed. The discussion focused on:

- Timescale on progress at Cononish Goldmine
- The future of the Trossachs Explorer/similar transport projects
- Impact study and findings of the Trossachs Explorer pilot
- Tree planting on the A83 Rest and be Thankful
- Engagement on the Visitor Levy and the positions of the four local authorities in the national park area
- West Highland Way Trust Governance structure

**ACTION:** DS to send GM previous CEO update papers with reference to Visitor Levy for information

**ACTION:** Sustainable Transport update to be given to Members at March Board Meeting

**DECISION:** Members **noted** the report.

## Item 10: 2024/25 Annual Operational Plan Progress Report

HS and ISP left the meeting

DS presented the report.

Discussion and questions from Members followed. The discussion focused on:

- Priority of the deliverables behind schedule
- LDP timeline
- Peatland restoration figures
- Camping Management Byelaws
- Migration into the Cloud

**DECISION:** Members **noted** the 2024/25 Annual Operational Plan Progress Report.

## Item 11: Finance Update

JK presented the report

## Items and Actions

Discussion and questions from Members followed. The discussion focused on:

- Admin spend figures
- Pensions
- Employers National Insurance contribution
- Spend on Peatland

**ACTION:** - JK to follow up with RE on Admin spend figures

**ACTION:** JK/SJ to follow up with RJ on Peatland spend figures

**DECISION:** Members **noted** the Finance Update.

## Item 12: Committee and Group Highlights

LA updated members on Youth Committee activity including their experience using the Trossachs explorer, social media update, session on planning applications and a survey on what young people want to see in the national park area.

CC updated members on the recent activity of the Planning and Access Committee including a recent meeting held in the community in Callander.

RE updated members on the recent activity of the Audit and Risk Committee including an update on the internal audit tender, the recent Deep Dive on staff retention and resilience and the recently completed Board Effectiveness Audit.

ME updated members on the Futures Group including the recent session on Green Economy.

CS updated members on the Countryside Trust including tree planting, health walks, development work and new appointments.

KA updated members on the Local Access Forum including next meeting dates.

## Item 13: Any other Business

HR thanked staff for their hard work throughout the year.

DS advised that the organisation will once again be participating in the Boardroom Apprentice programme, with a new participant joining in January 2025 and requested any member willing to help support and mentor.

HR advised that dates for strategy sessions, training and Futures Group for 2025 would be circulated to Members early in the new year.



<b>Items and Actions</b>
HR thanked all Members for their support during a challenging year and always remaining professional.
RJ formally thanked HR on behalf of the Board for all her work throughout 2024.
<b>Item 14: Date of Next Meeting</b>
10 March 2025

Signed

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Heather Reid, Convener