

Draft minutes of meeting held on 8 June 2026

Agenda Item 3

National Park Authority Board Meeting
14 September 2026

Paper for approval

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Present
Heather Reid (Convener) (HR)
Martin Earl (Depute Convener) (ME)
Sarah Drummond (SD)
Hazel Sorrell (HS)
Ronnie Erskine (RE)
David Mackie (DM)
Claire Chapman (CC)
Rhona Brock (RB)
Davy Fettes (DF)
Richard Johnson (RJ)
Gerry McGarvey (GM)
Maurice Corry (MC)
Islay Jackson (IJ), Youth Committee Board Shadow

Apologies
Colin Lee
Iain Shonny Paterson
Christopher Spray
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
Annie Fitzpatrick (AF), Governance and Information Advisor (Minute Taker)
Jane Kemp (JK), Head of Governance and Performance
Sam Stubbs (SS), Head of People and Assets
Kenny Auld (KA), Head of Visitor Services
Emily Davie (ED), Mobility Partnership Programme Manager
Nik Turner (NK), Strategic Engagement Manager
Matt Buckland (MB), Visitor Operations Manager
Deborah Sandals (Dsa), Place Projects Manager

Items and Actions
Item 1: Welcome and Apologies The Convener 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 hear proceedings with clarity. The Convener 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. Attendance noted with apologies from Chris Spray, Shonny Paterson and Colin Lee. 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 Convener's role in upholding those responsibilities.

Items and Actions
HR passed to DS to read the resolution that members need to agree to confirm that Agenda Item 18 can be held in a closed session. Members unanimously agreed.
Item 2: Declarations of Interest
No declarations of interest raised.
Item 3: Minutes of Meeting held on 9 March 2026
The minutes were proposed by SD and seconded by RJ. DECISION: The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 9 March 2026 were approved by Members.
Item 4: Matters Arising from meeting held on 9 March 2026
The convener introduced the paper and DS confirmed all matters are closed. RJ asked for an update on the upcoming Strategy Day in October. This is still in the planning stage and will be communicated to Members in due course.
Item 5: Camping Management Byelaw Review Consultation
HR handed to ME to introduce the paper. ME gave a short history of the byelaws coming to fruition. GW stated this was a mandatory 10-year review. He explained reasons why byelaws were needed and the impact they have had. They are not just for anti-social behaviour but for the impact on the environment. GW handed to KA to highlight some of the changes that are being proposed. 5 key topics-Geographical areas covered, time period covered, impacts of fires, motorhomes and campervans and protection of staff. 2 key issues we are seeking to address that we feel have changed over the years and need to be acknowledged: An increasing number of fires and increasing incidences of aggressive behaviour towards staff. Changes to highlight - Fires always to be raised off the ground in a contained manner. Staff can ask for the fire to be put out in times of increased risk. Aggressive behaviour is on the increase and hopefully the byelaws will give additional clarity and add weight to any prosecutions that we are seeking to take. Following this, we will go out to a 12-week consultation period. What is presented therefore today, may be subject to change when presented in September Board.

Items and Actions

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

- Aggression towards staff; existing crime laws exist to protect workers
- Following existing rules regarding fire risk
- Seasonal dates and byelaw coverage
- Promoting and communicating the new byelaws across the Park, especially to young people.
- Education plans on how to start, manage and put out fires safely.
- Ranger protection – how will this be enforced and what are repercussions when an incident occurs
- Anti-social behaviour
- Upcoming consultation plans
- Motorhome provision

Members were asked for a show of hands to NOTE or AGREE on the following:

- I. **Note** the informal engagement that has taken place with significant stakeholders to date in respect of gauging views on the impact of the byelaws and on any areas of change that should be considered.
- II. **Agree** that the Byelaws continue to be required and the review should primarily focus on any amendments deemed necessary to improve their effectiveness.
- III. **Agree** that (for the reasons set out in this report) the National Park Authority does not at this stage propose additional areas to be covered by the Byelaws but continues to listen to stakeholder views on the merits of any inclusions or deletions during the consultation.
- IV. **Agree** that the Byelaw amendments as set out in Appendix 2 (and summarised in this report) are appropriate proposed draft improvements to use for the purposes of consultation.
- V. **Approve** the attached draft consultation document for the purposes of carrying out a 12-week consultation.
- VI. **Note** that officers may undertake further minor editorial amendments to the document and associated digitally accessible version prior to publication.
- VII. **Note** that the outcome of the consultation and final proposed amendments will be presented to the Board at a later date and prior

Items and Actions

to submission to Scottish Ministers by no later than 28th February 2027.

Members were happy to agree and note all of the above.

HR thanked the wider team for all the work undertaken.

Consultation process and future events – HR noted that if community councils would like to have National Park staff come and speak at meetings. Local authority nominated members have to please request from MB.

Item 6: National Park Mobility Route Map

HR passed to KA who introduced the paper. We have co-ordinated and facilitated this and to look at this through a lense of residential need, visitor economy, inclusion, man-management, sustainable revenue, investment, capacity building and climate, is a first.

ED took members through the paper.

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

- This is beyond transport; more like journeys around National Park and experiences.
- The shift/what's been unlocked that's got us here to this point.
- The main 'blockers' and how will we tackle them.
- Our commitment as a National Park to continue this role.
- Associated risks
- Securing long term funding
- Acknowledge the work and thinking of the Futures Group on this topic
- Wider transport links beyond the National Park area

HR thanked all involved.

DECISION: Members were asked to approve the paper and note delivery of points. All members content to approve and note.

Items and Actions

Item 7: Committee Membership Update

DS introduced the paper and introduced the proposal of MI joining the Planning and Access Committee.

DECISION: Members approved the appointment of MI to the Planning and Access Committee with immediate effect.

Item 8: CEO Report (inc. Pre-season Visitor Management Update)

GW highlighted the following from the report:

- Scottish Government update was written a couple of weeks ago and we had confirmation of the cabinet secretary visit during the summer.
- Significant number of engagements of Scottish Government and time spent with appointees.
- Significant event with the first minister meeting with CEOs today to discuss public sector reform - AM to attend
- Visitor levy – 2 authorities have set up Visitor Levy forums that we are participating in. We are continuing to engage with the others that are still considering their position.
- Received communication from our team on LDLUP – good response on this.
- Updates on East Loch Lomond.
- West Highland Way Trust is now fully operational, and we have passed everything over for it to function independently.

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

- Transparency of how money will be spent with Visitor Levy.
- Participation with Local Authorities re Visitor Levy.
- Facility in Callander used as a National Park office.

DECISION: Members noted the content of the report.

Items and Actions

Item 9: Place Investment Strategy Update

HR welcomed DSa to the meeting and the paper was introduced by SM.

DSa gave an update on the progress from last year and outlined the priorities for this year, including risk issues and next steps, all detailed in the report.

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

- Upgrades on Tarbet Peir, funding and timescales for completion.
- Importance of sustainability

DECISION: Members agreed to note the progress, direction of budget and resource and information on the Place Programme.

Item 10: Equalities Outcomes 2025-2029 Update

HR welcomed NT to the meeting who introduced the paper.

NT gave an overview of Pride and highlighted the following from the report:

Outcome 1 – IJ took up the role of Board Shadow and gives the Youth Committee a voice at Board. Thank you to Board for embracing this.

Outcome 2 – Significant improvements. Welcomed underrepresented communities to the park. Commend DSa team to their commitment to EDI across all the work they do.

Outcome 3 – A lot of work behind the scenes and commend teams on their ethos to try and include as many people as possible.

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

- Has Neurodiversity been accommodated in areas covered.
- Thank you for highlighting the importance of Pride.
- Consultancy reports.
- Appreciation for the Ranger Service.

DECISION: Members noted the content of the report.

ACTION - NT will provide Visitor Report to ME

Items and Actions

Item 11: Convener's Report

HR gave a verbal update.

- Meeting with chair of National Park Partnership
- With GW and ME, represented the National Park Authority at the sad occasion of Alistair McKee's funeral in Edinburgh.
- New director general's visit to the National Park
- Meetings with ME preparing for the next few months with the change of Board Members. Thanks to ME for taking the time and joining the meetings, which will ensure a smooth transition.
- Preparing for local elections in the wards with info sessions. The count is on 9th July. Thanks to ME for helping and DS, AF and GW for the work behind the scenes to prepare the organisation for this event.

HR offered to attend any events, supporting Members around the Park.

Item 12: 2025/26 AOP Final Report

DS took members through the paper.

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

- Handover for the existing ministerial Members to the new Members
- 2nd round of user testing for website
- Landscape Connections
- Countryside Trust
- Climate adaptation and net zero projects

DECISION: Members noted the contents of the report.

ACTION – AM to follow up with SD on what type of website testing will be used.

Item 13: 2026/27 AOP Progress Report

DS introduced the paper and highlighted that 'the business as usual' deliverables have been included against the Park plan chapters that they have been coded to this year.

Items and Actions

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

- Conic Hill Path – servicing and drainage works due to be completed by June 2026. End date for final snagging.
- Conic Hill Handrail.
- Resilient Farm Network

DECISION: Members noted the contents of the report.

ACTION - DF to discuss Conic Hill handrail with the Local Access Forum.

ACTION – SJ to provide ISP with update on Resilient Farm Network.

Item 14: Financial Report

JK introduced the report.

The Year End process has started and annual audit started last week.

Despite only having the NRF confirmed mid-way through the year last year, we were able to spend slightly more than all of the capital we were allocated.

2026-27 – we have confirmation of peatland NRF funding. 100K to 250K will hopefully help avoid some of the blockages we have last year.

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

- Well done to the team on the underspend.

DECISION: Members noted the contents of the report.

Item 15: Committee and Group Highlights

Youth Committee – IJ – 2 members represented the Youth Committee in the stakeholder sessions for the camping byelaw review. In-person meeting held at HQ and had discussion on the future of the YC. Filming with the comms team and launched the Youth Action Programme application mid-March. All is being promoted on Instagram. Another 2 members are promoting the elections for the Board.

Planning and Access Committee – CC – Welcomed MI to the Planning Committee and look forward to seeing him at the first meeting. Planning meetings at the end of February and March. LDLUP has moved to the next stage and SM's team will be busy with this over the next few months.

Audit and Risk Committee – RE – Audit and Risk meeting held last week and thanks to DM as vice convenor. Good progress update on external audit. The accounts look like they are on track, however it's a tight timeline-1st September.

Items and Actions
ARC considered year-end papers which gave a good degree of assurance. Internal Auditors Azets are providing a good service. No major weaknesses found and good progress. They presented their paper on planning authority audit and recommendations for change. We reviewed corporate document process for review which is much improved on what we had previously. Best value report was received.
Local Access Forum – DF – LAF going well and thanks to KA and the Access Team. Come October we will be changing our Chair for the Forum to Rachel Taylor, who is a keen outdoors woman, volunteers for Rights of Way and Access Society and is part of the Scottish Women’s Walking Group. We have had quite a few cases in our advisory role. Some members have been actively engaging in the byelaw review.
Countryside Trust – HR read out some points provided from Chris Spray – New plant nursery up and running which will help with nature restoration around the Park. Live applications to continue this kind of work. People and Nature Wild Strathfillan project the final year of delivery with events and activities coming up. Some work being done co-ordinated by the Trust for the Great Trossachs Forest project and the NNR. Landscape Connections are having a great period of activity. Walk In The Park managed to attract 81 walkers to the annual ‘All Group’ walk in Aberfoyle. Looking to recruit a volunteer Treasurer. Short-term funding looking good but longer-term funding remains challenging.
Futures Group – SD – FG met on 24 th March with another session on Housing but with more specifics on levers and interventions that we can try and put forward and tackle some of the challenges we have seen around affordable housing. Thank you to the speakers and NP staff. Thanks to AF and AM for helping move the FG forward.
Item 16: Any Other Business None.
Item 17: Date of Next Meeting Monday 14 September 2026

Signed_____

Heather Reid, Convener