

National Park Authority Board Meeting



Minutes of Meeting held at 10:00am on 6th October 2014
National Park Headquarters, Balloch

Present:

Linda McKay (Convener)	Colin Bayes (CB)
Owen McKee (Depute Convener)	Fergus Wood (FW)
David McKenzie (DMcK)	William Nisbet (WN)
Angus Allan (AA)	George Freeman (GF)
Lindsay Morrison (LM)	David McCowan (DMcC)
James Robb (JR)	Petra Biberbach (PB)
Martin Earl (ME)	Hazel Sorrel (HS)
Bob Ellis (BE)	

In Attendance:

Fiona Logan (FL)	Stuart Mearns (SM)
Gordon Watson (GW)	Tony McInnes (TM)
Jaki Carnegie (JC)	Charlotte Wallace (CW)
Bridget Jones (BJ)	Sandra Dalziel (SD)
Anna MacLean (AM)	Sharon McIntyre (SMcl)
Scott Nisbet (SN)	

Apologies: None

Item	Action	Action by
1	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>The Convener opened the meeting and welcomed all those present. All members were present.</p>	
2	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The following potential interests were declared in relation to agenda item 5, 'Your Park'.</p> <p>The Convener owns a residential property with adjoining land within a proposed management zone.</p> <p>OM owns a residential property within a proposed management zone, is owner of the village shop at Lochearnhead where he sells fishing permits and owns land opposite this shop.</p> <p>DMcC owns a residential property and land within the Park but outwith the proposed management zones. He is also currently involved in commercial discussions in relation to a business within a proposed management zone.</p> <p>ME owns a residential property within a proposed management zone.</p> <p>FW owns land with loch frontage at Kinlochard within a proposed management zone.</p>	

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3	<p>Minutes of Meeting held on 16th June</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by LM and seconded by CB.</p>	
4	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>JC introduced the report. Members noted the closed action.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	
5	<p>Your Park</p> <p>GW introduced the report and gave a presentation to members on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) background to the 'Your Park' camping management proposals and work carried out to date; b) proposed consultation document, process and timescales; and c) proposed process for managing consultation responses. <p>Members discussed the resource implications of implementing the byelaws. GW advised that an operational plan would be created in conjunction with Police Scotland and the National Park Ranger team.</p> <p>Members discussed whether the consultation document should include more information about the penalties for breach of the byelaws. BJ confirmed that the consultation document would be updated to include more detail about penalties.</p> <p>ACTION: BJ to update consultation document to include more detail about penalties.</p> <p>Members discussed the areas included in the proposed management zones and considered the likelihood of camping issues being displaced to areas outside the proposed management zones. GW referred members to section 5.3 of the report which outlines the rationale behind the proposed management zones. GW explained that the proposals were informed by data collected by National Park Rangers and local knowledge. Smaller management zones would be more challenging to communicate to members of the public. It was noted that the boundaries of the proposed zones would form part of the proposed public consultation, so members of the public, local communities and stakeholders would have an opportunity to comment on the impact of the proposed boundaries.</p>	<p>BJ</p>

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	<p>Members queried whether hard copies of the consultation document would be available at the Callander office. GW confirmed that hard copies of the consultation document would be available at the Callander office.</p> <p>Members discussed the communications strategy for the consultation and considered the merits and risks of using social media. GW explained that social media has been a helpful tool for engaging members of the public, communities and stakeholders in previous consultations such as 'Live Park'. It is a useful tool for promoting engagement, discussion and debate.</p> <p>Members proposed that page 19 of the consultation document be updated to clarify that we are interested in hearing from all landowners interested in campsite development within the National Park i.e. those inside <u>and</u> outside the proposed management zones. BJ confirmed that the wording on page 19 would be updated accordingly.</p> <p>ACTION: BJ to update wording on page 19 of the consultation document.</p> <p>Members noted that CW's recent briefing to Local Access Forum about the 'Your Park' proposals had been helpful and that the Forum was largely supportive of the consultation.</p> <p>Members queried whether Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) had been briefed on the 'Your Park' proposals. GW advised that officers were liaising with all key stakeholders, including PKC.</p> <p>There was some discussion about the terminology used for the proposed 'Wider Trossachs' management zone and whether this could be called the 'Trossachs' zone. GW confirmed that the terminology 'Wider Trossachs' is necessary as the zone covers some of the Breadalbane area.</p> <p>Members discussed whether the National Park boundary in the consultation document at Loch Long was accurate, as this did not reflect where the stone threshold sign is. GW confirmed that the boundary in the consultation document is accurate. The stone threshold signs are positioned as near to the National Park boundaries as possible, but in locations with the greatest visual impact.</p> <p>DECISION:</p> <p>Members approved the <i>Your Park</i> consultation proposals attached as Appendix 1.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BJ</p>

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	<p>Members agreed to progress with a 12-week public consultation to take place between 13 October 2014 and 12 January 2015. This includes a statutory consultation on the proposed camping management byelaws under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.</p> <p>The Convener and members commended the 'Your Park' team on the content of the report and for producing an engaging, high quality consultation document.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Conservation & Land Use Update</p> <p>SN introduced the report. A key highlight was the launch of Wild Park 2020, the new National Park biodiversity action plan at Queen Street Station in August by Paul Wheelhouse the Minister for Environment & Climate Change. Green screen technology was used to allow partners and the public to appear in five different scenes from woodland habitats to mountain bogs. The 'Tales From Our Wild Park' publication was also launched at this event. SN thanked members for their participation at this event.</p> <p>The Glen Dochart Waders Project had been put forward for the Nature of Scotland Award, a prestigious national award that will raise the profile of conservation in the Park. The award ceremony takes place on the 20th November 2014.</p> <p>Members highlighted that the Forth would benefit from a similar project to the Tay invasive non-native species project. SN advised that a similar project is in place there, led by the River Forth Fisheries Trust with support from the NPA. The funding package is running out, but it is hoped that a way can be found to continue this project.</p> <p>Members queried whether there are updated figures on the distribution of red and grey squirrels in the Park. SN advised that numbers are monitored on an on-going basis and he confirmed that he would confirm the updated figures to members.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p> <p>ACTION: SN to confirm if updated figures are available on the distribution of red and grey squirrels.</p>	<p>SN</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Visitor Experience Update</p> <p>MB introduced the report. Key highlights were the completion of the Pontoon at Drumkinnon Bay and the National Park experience installation in the</p>	

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	<p>international arrivals area at Glasgow airport. The Great Scottish Swim sold out with 2,500 entrants taking part. This exceeded the target of growing this event by twenty percent and recorded sixty percent of participants from outside Scotland resulting in significant economic benefit to the Park.</p> <p>There was some discussion about the maintenance of signage on the A82. MB noted her awareness of this issue and that a review of the signage in this area was planned.</p> <p>Members referred to section 6.2 of the report regarding the Gateway Centre, highlighting that as the Authority's second largest commercial asset this should be brought to the Board. FL advised that JC is the project lead on this matter and this will be presented to the Board.</p> <p>Members queried how long the Glasgow Airport project would be in place. MB confirmed that it would be in place for one year and approximately one million visitors would view this. Members suggested engaging with Edinburgh Airport about a similar project there.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p> <p>ACTION: Gateway Centre project to be presented to the Board.</p>	<p>JC</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Visitor Management Update</p> <p>BJ introduced the report highlighting that three million pounds of lottery funding has been secured for the National Park's joint mountain path project. This will be a five year project taking in hills such as Ben An, Ben Ledi and the 'Arrochar Alps'.</p> <p>BJ advised that our partnership with the John Muir Trust has resulted in an increased number of John Muir Awards completed within the Park with 1200 achieved. This links in well to delivering on the conservation challenges set out in Wild Park 2020.</p> <p>Members raised concern over the use of land at David Marshall Lodge for mountain biking where users are going at high speed and tracking this using the 'Strava' app. The Convenor noted this concern.</p> <p>Members noted that the issue of visitors and car parking at Luss at been highlighted at a community council meeting. BJ advised that she would follow up on this issue.</p> <p>Members queried whether any more toilet facilities would be provided at lay-</p>	

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	<p>bys and near rights of way. BJ advised that visitor facilities were being reviewed as part of the Five Lochs Project.</p> <p>Members enquired as to the status of the delivery of the joint mountain path project. BJ advised that this is in stage one, which involves wider consultation with land owners for a period of six to twelve months.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	
9	<p>Rural Development Update</p> <p>GW introduced the report. A key highlight was delivering EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) applications within eighteen weeks and not forty-six weeks which is the national average.</p> <p>The administration for LEADER LAGS (links between actions of rural development local action groups) has been a key focus and has been aligned with the Park Authority's priorities. Business Plans have now been submitted to Scottish Government.</p> <p>BE expressed an interest in section 7.3, Paths in the Park 2014-15 training programme and the Access Forum being made aware of the site visit in 2015.</p> <p>There was some discussion about the statistics for EIA applications. GW confirmed that this was a result of the hydro scheme applications.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p> <p>ACTION: SM to advise BE of scheduling of Paths in Park site visit in early 2015.</p>	SM
10	<p>Corporate Update</p> <p>FL introduced the report highlighting the update to reporting on statutory compliance, which will be presented to the Delivery Group.</p> <p>FL again issued thanks to GW, the Visitor Management team and the Communication team for all of their work on the Your Park project.</p> <p>FL noted that the Best Companies report will be ready in late November or early December.</p>	

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	<p>FL highlighted the key projects of the Communications team, including the successful delivery of Wild Park and LIVE Park.</p> <p>FL detailed that the delivery of 'Your Park' was noted as a risk in section 3.1 due to resource and workload.</p> <p>Members queried the variance of £337,099.00 and this unbudgeted income. JC advised that this was a result of receiving this income earlier than expected and confirmed that due to the sizeable amount of this income it would have affected the variance whenever it was received.</p> <p>Members noted their appreciation of a letter from Minister, Paul Wheelhouse, on their reappointment to the Board. The Convenor advised that she would advise the Minister that this was appreciated. The Convenor also advised that she personally wrote to each candidate to thank them for their interest and future engagement.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p> <p>ACTION: Convenor to thank Paul Wheelhouse on behalf of reappointed members for letters.</p>	<p>Convenor</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Planning & Access Committee Update</p> <p>OM, Chair of the Planning & Access Committee gave a verbal update, noting that Kate Sankey's term of office had ended and thanked her for her contribution to the committee. OM invited expressions of interest from any members interested in joining the committee.</p> <p>OM detailed that some further training on Local Review Bodies (LRB) would be taking place later this year and confirmed that an additional member was required for the LRB panel. OM informed the Board that site visits had taken place out in the community recently and the local community were appreciative of this.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p> <p>ACTION: Members to contact OM to express an interest in joining the committee and LRB panel.</p>	<p>All Members</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Audit Committee Update</p> <p>LM, Chair of the Audit Committee, gave a verbal update informing the Board that the Audit Committee had signed off the accounts in June and thanked</p>	

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	<p>JC and the Authority's Finance and Performance Manager for the preparation of these. KPMG will be our internal auditor for the following year and are well positioned to deliver the accounts for next year.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	
13	<p>Delivery Group Update</p> <p>CB, Chair of the Delivery Group, gave a verbal update on the work of the Delivery Group noting that at the August Delivery Group meeting the committee reviewed a new style of reporting based on the National Partnership Plan, the Corporate Plan and the Annual Operating Plan.</p> <p>CB advised that there had been two cases of staff reporting hand arm vibration syndrome, although on this being investigated by the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) Investigator no further action was recommended.</p> <p>We are awaiting feedback from the HSE in relation to an incident involving a hedge strimmer.</p> <p>CB noted that there are now project dashboard reports for high risk projects such as LIVE Park, Pontoon and Your Park and that it is reassuring to see the risks within key projects being managed. A report is expected to be produced for the Gateway Centre and this will be presented to the Board.</p> <p>The Convenor welcomed this professional approach to project management.</p> <p>DECISION: Members noted the report.</p>	
14	<p>National Park Partnership Plan Progress Report</p> <p>GW introduced the NPPP advising that this report presents the draft text for the NPPP which will be finalised at a meeting taking place in November, the date of this meeting has to be confirmed.</p> <p>GW brought to members attention sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the report. Section 4.2 informs members of the meeting scheduled to take place at Balmaha Visitor Centre to highlight the key areas of the Park Authority's work. GW outlined that it is intended to discuss the achievements and the proposals to enhance future partnership engagement. A key opportunity for partners to work together will be on the delivery of 'Your Park'.</p> <p>Under the NPPP the annual review takes into consideration the three main areas of Conservation, Visitor Experience and Rural Development.</p>	

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	<p>Under Conservation key developments this year have been introducing a successful business planning approach for land managers and this will now be rolled out moving forward. The first five year management plan for the Royal Society for the Protection of Bird's (RSPB) new reserve at Loch Lomond has also been agreed.</p> <p>Under Visitor Experience, our work within the tourism sector, one highlight has been the installation of the pontoon at Drumkinnon Bay in partnership with Scottish Enterprise. A solution and offering for the Gateway Centre will be a priority in the coming months.</p> <p>Under Visitor Management, the 'Your Park' proposals will be the main focus.</p> <p>Under Rural Development, the LEADER programme is allowing us to have further engagement with the private sector and local businesses as we move into the next stage of the local plan.</p> <p>GW advised that on page 40 of the report, the update on the National Park Scenic Routes, will be updated to green as this has been under reported and the installations in conjunction with Transport Scotland have been completed.</p> <p>FW detailed that at EUROPARC 2014 this year the attendees were impressed with the Community Development Trusts in the National Park and the outcomes of their work such as the community purchase of the Aberfoyle garage and fuel pumps and the hydro scheme in Callander. He suggested that the achievements of the Trusts be further highlighted in the Park Partnership Plan Annual Report.</p> <p>ACTION: Further highlight the work of the Community Development Trusts in the National Park Partnership Plan Annual Report.</p> <p>The Convenor highlighted that the use of key paths is detailed as deteriorating, but this conflicts with BJ's update. BJ advised that a commentary may be required in this section of the report to explain variations. FL noted that the use of baseline end of year figures may be more appropriate.</p> <p>DECISION: The Board approved the National Park Partnership Plan Annual Review 2013 – 2014 for final revisions and amendments.</p> <p>ACTION: BJ to consider the figures relating to key paths on page 8 of Appendix 1.</p>	<p>AB</p> <p>BJ</p>

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15	<p>LIVE Park Consultation</p> <p>SM advised this report provides an update on the project following the consultation which took place over the spring and summer this year. SM advised that the weblinks to the appendices detailed in the report are now available on the National Park website.</p> <p>The Main Issues Report allowed for comments to be received in relation to the consultation and these were collated not only online but through a range of channels such as public meetings and through social media.</p> <p>SM noted that the feedback was encouraging and raised the profile of the project. Notably the responses received were favourable with fewer responses and contentious issues raised in comparison to previous consultations.</p> <p>In relation to the four main issues identified there has been general agreement on these. SM advised that the main comments received were in relation to the visitor accommodation proposal at Braeval and the housing proposal in Drymen.</p> <p>SM noted that 18 proposals for development were also received and from these two new preferred sites were identified in Callander. Due to the addition of these two new sites which were not included in the original Main Issues Report these sites will require to be consulted upon and it is proposed that Appendix 1 should be circulated for a six week period to allow for this to take place.</p> <p>The next stages in this project are for further engagement to take place with some communities such as Callander and Buchanan further to the Proposed Local Development Plan being issued for consultation in the Spring of 2015.</p> <p>Members queried how conflicting comments will be assessed and the responses to these communicated. SM explained that all comments will be grouped as far as possible and responses to these outlined, at present these are still being worked through.</p> <p>ACTION: Members noted the report and approved the publication of Appendix 1: Additional Site's Assessment – Summary Report for a six week public consultation, with delegation to the Director of Operations to approve minor editorial and presentations changes.</p>	
16	<p>Board Calendars for 2015 and 2016</p>	

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	<p>JC introduced the Board Calendars for 2015 and 2016, these have been produced are in line with the scheduled school holidays for the local regions and follow the same format as the meetings for this year.</p> <p>Members suggested that we schedule more meetings to take place outwith the National Park Headquarters to allow us to be present in the areas we are discussing. FL advised that she is aware of a recent meeting of the Cairngorms National Park which took place in Edinburgh and allowed for a minister to come and speak at the meeting which was well received. The Convenor indicated her support of this proposal.</p> <p>ACTION: Executive and SD to consider whether any meetings could be scheduled off site.</p> <p>Members asked if there were any issues around additional staff workload resulting from the Monday scheduling of meetings. FL noted the concerns raised and advised that the current arrangements worked well for staff.</p> <p>DECISION: The Draft Calendars for 2015 and 2016 Board, Committee and Group Meetings were approved.</p>	<p>Executive & SD</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>Review of the Planning & Access Committee's Schemes of Delegation relative to both Planning and Access Functions</p> <p>GW introduced this paper to members and advised that this paper has already been reviewed by the Planning & Access Committee. GW brought members attention to paragraph 3.3, this outlines the key update to the document whereby for applications which are made by or on behalf of the Park Authority or where the Park Authority has an interest the Appointed Officer will be able to determine the outcome without referring the case to the Planning & Access Committee.</p> <p>With reference to the Access Scheme of Delegation, updates on the public rights of way from the The Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967 have been added.</p> <p>DECISION: Members approved the modified Access Scheme of Delegation and the Planning Scheme of Delegation for subsequent consultation and approval by Scottish Ministers and thereafter, the Director of Operations is given delegated authority to adopt the Planning Scheme of Delegation following approval by Scottish Ministers; and agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Operations to make any technical or non-substantive</p>	

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	amendments to the Scheme as may be required by Scottish Ministers.	
18	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Convenor advised that there is a meeting scheduled with the Forestry Commission on Wednesday 8th October which will allow for engagement with this key partner.</p> <p>The vacancy on the Board was discussed. Board members noted their disappointment that this position has not been filled yet. The Convenor confirmed that she was meeting with Scottish Government about this and she hoped an appointment would be made by the end of 2014.</p> <p>WN and FW attended EUROPARC Conference recently representing the Park Authority.</p> <p>The Royal Highland Education Trust have been working in conjunction with the Ranger service and volunteers allowing 260 children to be involved in activities to date.</p>	
19	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The date of the next Board meeting is the 8th December 2014.</p> <p>Agenda items 20 and 21 were then addressed in a closed session.</p>	