

CRAGG

CAIRNGORM, ROTHLEMURCHUS AND GLENMORE GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THURSDAY 21st September 2006

1 – Present

Keith Duncan	SNH (in the Chair)
Caroline Doyle-McManus	SNH (minutes)
Audrey Mackenzie	Aviemore & Vicinity Community Council
Willie McKenna	Rothiemurchus & Glenmore Community Association
Sally Dowden	Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce
David Jardine	Forestry Commission Scotland
Fiona Newcombe	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Johnnie Grant	Rothiemurchus Estate
Allan Bantick	Scottish Wildlife Trust
Monica MacMillan	Badenoch & Strathspey Local History Group
Bob Kinaird	CairnGorm Mountain Ltd
Louise Clark	Highland Council (Rep: William Gilfillan)

Apologies

Gregor Rimmel	
Neil Sutherland	
Mary Ferguson	
William Gilfillan	Louise Clark (stand in)
Phillipa Grant	
Anne Angus	
Stuart Benn	
Tim Walker	

2- Minutes of the meeting of Thursday 8th June 2006

- One amendment to the minutes to remove named comments, number the pages and re-draft.
- Fiona Newcombe CNPA has agreed to chair the next two meetings.

3 – Matters Arising

As all matters arising would be covered by the agenda, it was agreed to proceed to the agenda.

- 3.1** The History project – Update Alison Grant, and Willie to get together in December to move the project forward.

- 3.2 Transfer of HIE Estate – The formal consultation has been issued. Awaiting responses, due in early November.
- 3.3 Development of CRAGG website – Actioned. Up and running.
- 3.4 CCC have set up and will manage the CRAGG website, with financial support from CNPA. www.craggonline.org.uk. Five sections are waiting to be populated. An email address has still to be finalised. A copy of the transfer of the HIE Estate to be submitted for inclusion to the CRAGG web site in PDF format.

Action: All named associations/groups represented on CRAGG to provide their web site link to the CRAGG website. ***Action:*** In addition, a nominated name and email address of each association/group to be provided as point of contact for CRAGG. Details of name web address and email address as point of contact for each association to - admin1@cairngormschamber.com

The group agreed to put the CRAGG management strategy on the web site, approved Minutes and agendas in advance of meetings.

Action: All to consider other topics to be put on to Web site.

CCC were thanked for delivering this project.

- 3.5 (Ref 4.1) No action required.
- 3.6 (Ref 4.1) Actioned.
- 3.7 **(Ref 4.1) Consultation on proposed extension to Cairngorm NNR.**
Boundaries in relation to the NNR, and which may or may not to apply to the HIE Estate. Opportunities will be available in Tranches 2-3 next summer/autumn to discuss these particular issues. Update later on the current consultation.

Action: Keith to advise CRAGG members in advance of any future consultations starting.

The SNH position on primacy of nature in relation to NNR's was discussed. It was decided to seek members' views on their understanding/views/meaning on the topic of primacy of nature in order to assist others in relation to discussions regarding possible further extensions to the Cairngorms NNR. Suggestion that some time in the next six months that CRAGG have a discussion on this issue; 7th December was agreed.

Action: All to consider their views on primacy of nature with a view to discussing the topic at the next meeting. Keith to circulate any further SNH literature on the subject prior to the next meeting.

- 3.8 **Off road route –**
Concerns over part of the existing route were raised. A response was received in relation to these concerns however another letter was to be written because the concerns were not fully addressed. Some action has been taken, bollards have been put in place, however gravel is still at the side of the road, route down into Rothiemurchus visitor centre has not been

completed as agreed and concern has been raised that road bikes will not use the route because of gravel on the path. The gravel is spilling onto the road and path causing a health & safety issue.

Action : Louise to report this matter to William Gilfillan.

3.9 CNPA Park Plan (Ref 6) Actioned.

3.10 CNPA Park Plan (Ref 6). Actioned.

3.11 CNPA Park Plan (Ref 6) See section 6 below.

4 CRAGG Website

Action : Keith/Caroline to secure documents to include onto the CRAGG web site.

5 Off road route

Action carried forward from the last meeting. Update – email was sent prior to the meeting explaining that a funding opportunity from Sustrans had arisen. The route has been short listed and confirmation on the funding has still to be given. Action to take place includes planning permission, finalisation on the route specification, and maintenance arrangements. The next step is for consultation with funding partners, the Estate and other interested parties to be implemented. FC could provide civil engineers to cut down on costs involved. A timeline needs to be identified for all elements of the project and a project manager needs to be identified.

6 Special qualities of CRAGG

What are the special qualities of CRAGG area and also in relation to the Park area?

Members were reminded of the qualities as listed in the draft Park Plan, they include:

Distinctive Landscape; Rich Biodiversity; Mountains and Moorland; Forest and Woodlands; Rivers and Lochs; Recreation and Enjoyment; Distinctive Architecture and Settlements and Communities.

It was suggested that the CRAGG area is not unique within the Park but, that one of its strengths was that all of the above qualities are found within the small area i.e. CRAGG area. Furthermore, that it was the history of CRAGG, and how we all get together to share and gain better understanding of others views that is important in the CRAGG area. The area receives much of the hype and problems, the biggest share of visitors and supports the largest community in the Strath. There are many demands in relation to the landscape, recreation, biodiversity and community within a relatively small area.

CNPA interim report on responses to the consultation on the draft park plan is available on the CNPA website. Special qualities in this respect is currently under review with CNPA as well as guiding principles. It will be ready for final approval by the CNP Board in December.

The first part of CRAGG process was conflict resolution, this has been resolved. The second part was information sharing, this has been resolved. The third part is collaboration, which is underway. The principle goal to work towards is sustainability. There were points made on housing for young people and youth activities within the park that in relation to the Park Plan it was not balanced in terms of economics. Further comments were made suggesting that the CRAGG model should be included within the park plan of an example of how communities and other groups can be brought together. It was pointed out that 80% of jobs

are from the private sector and that in itself made it successful. It was pointed out that the draft Park Plan addresses environmentally sustainable tourism as well as economically sustainable, green tourism is an ongoing aspect, and includes transport as well as other priorities such as waste management.

Action : Fiona Newcome to report back to staff involved with producing the Park Plan the points raised during the meeting.

It was suggested that the CRAGG events group could draw up a paper on sustainable tourism and partnership working to include in our website.

Action : CRAGG events sub group to develop a paper on Green tourism and partnership working for inclusion within CRAGG web site.

7 CRAGG Membership

A common understanding of CRAGG's values. It was put forward that the different organisations around the table should give a short presentation to help new members, given that some of the absentees were new members, in order to give them a better understanding of who the members are, alongside a short history of the attainments as part of CRAGG. With information of where CRAGG came from and where we are going. A suggestion to evaluate CRAGG's achievements and its shortcomings was put forward, and how well CRAGG has stuck to its values, its attendance and success. There was suggestion that to list the tangible successes would not do full justice to all the non-tangible successes achieved which are difficult to measure or quantify. It was suggested that CRAGG set more targets in delivering actions from the strategy and get on with delivery.

Action : It was agreed to hold a special meeting on Thursday 18th January. Fiona Newcombe to lead. Further discussion on the content of this meeting to be discussed on 7 December.

8 Information Sharing

NNR

8.1 Update of the first Tranche review of Cairngorms NNR. The first round of consultations closed on 19th July, there were just nine responses. A consultation response report has been circulated to all of those who raised an issue. To avoid any confusion SNH have decided to name the individual names of the working estates that are within the NNR. The board has approved the three extended NNR's and they are Abernethy NNR, Glenmore NNR (adopted as a working title) and Invereshie and Inshriach NNR arising from the first round of alterations to the NNR with a view to launching them next spring. It was pointed out that not only are these the working title names for the Estates, some are also the parish names.

8.2 Events Sub-Group

Event organisers have requested a meeting with CRAGG on Thursday 28th September at 10:30am in relation to the Skyline event adventure race (contact Mark Diggins). There is no proposed date for this event as yet.

Action : Keith to contact land managers not present at the meeting.

8.3 An Camas Mor

Public meeting held, there was a very good turnout. The meeting was very successful.

8.4 Rothiemurchus Public Benefits Study

The report of the study is almost complete and copies will be circulated to all involved parties and members of CRAGG. Proposal for a single funding mechanism for all public bodies in the future.

8.5 Rothiemurchus Forest Plan

Has now been adopted. Work will be done on a popular version. Support will be sought to produce the popular version, and publicity will follow.

8.6 BT Exchange

Dilemma Glenmore has a broadband on the exchange at 512kb. This has been recognised as being inadequate. This has been in place for around twelve months. In relation to business in the area the supply and demand aspects are out of proportion. There has been a proposal to go back to BT and request a 2mb connection. If other business and interested parties are also looking to upgrade this would stand the community in better stead for BT to upgrade as they will be looking to the supply and demand ratio.

Action : Bob Kinnaird to contact businesses and interested parties within the area to get an accurate count of how many would take up this opportunity.

8.7 Transport

There was a meeting from Strath Trans to discuss transport within the area. This is deemed as a major priority. Discussion is underway.

Action: An update may be provided at the next meeting by Tim.

8.8 National Centre for the Mountain Environment

CairnGorm Mountain: Although the main majority of activities within the CairnGorm mountain is skiing, there are plans to diversify. Aiming at economical, environmental and social aspects. A handout was given out to members. 'A Vision for the future of the Cairngorm Mountain Ltd'. This includes a proposal to become a National Centre for the Mountain Environment. CML looking to register as a community interest company.

8.9 SOAC

It was mentioned that in a past press release that an individual was recently found not guilty of lighting a fire. This has been looked upon as very damaging, and after discussion with police there was found to have been a plea bargain by the accused which resulted in pleading guilty to two other offences and one being dropped. The consequences being that this could leave the general public with the impression that lighting a fire is not an offence. It was noted that an SNH Access Advisor has been tracking this case. It was also noted that the local police did not have copies of the access code.

Action : Keith to check if this has been discussed with senior access managers and update at the next meeting. Fiona to alert CNPA access staff to this issue. Keith to enquire about access code distribution to the police.

8.10 Fire

Point raised following a recent moorland/woodland fire in the area. Is the CRAGG area properly equipped in terms of the logistics of emergency fire procedures, insurance by

different land owners, and a first point of contact for emergency helicopters etc. Planning for these events are worth while. The first point of contact should be the Highland Council Emergency Planning Team. A point was made that there was no formal plan for how to evacuate Glenmore village. It was noted that there is no significant spare helicopter capacity in the Highlands. There are five fire groups within the park, Fiona to check what the situation is at present. 1-2 camp fires a week were being dealt with at Rothiemurchus during the summer months. It was noted that there is not fire risk insurance for native woodlands.

Action : CRAGG to work collectively on fire planning, people management and health & safety. Advice will be sought from experienced land owners and work closely with the community and local businesses.

8.11 Glenmore

- Albyn housing are putting in a planning application for affordable housing in Glenmore.
- Forest Design Plan consultation nearing end.
- A detailed plan is ongoing with Scottish Water to upgrade the sewage works.
- A night time light event towards Ryvoan is being planned as party of Highland Year of Culture the event titled “Between two Worlds” will take place between 3-25 November 2007.
- South of Loch Morlich will undergo a thinning of the plantation starting next week.
- Between Rothiemurchus and Glenmore there have been over 50 Capercaillie chick this year.

8.12 Rothiemurchus

There is now a new landowner at Rothiemurchus – Highland Small Communities Trust at Dellmor, Inverdrue. They now own the land which is proposed for affordable housing.

9 Date and Chair of Next meetings

Thursday 7th December at Glenmore Lodge, at 6pm.

Fiona Newcombe CNPA to chair the meeting.

Thursday 18th January at Glenmore Lodge, at 6pm. (Special Meeting)

Fiona Newcombe CNPA to facilitate the meeting.