

# Cairngorm Advisory Group

## NOTE OF MEETING

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14.00 – 15.30

Thursday 10th March 2022

Microsoft Teams



**Cairngorm Advisory Group  
10 March 2022**

**Note of virtual meeting**

**Present**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Alistair Dodds	Chair, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Chair of meeting)
Uwe Stoneman	Abernethy Forest Estate (RSPB)
Janis Bootle	Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust
Mark Tate	Cairngorm Business Partnership
Susan Smith	Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd
Jim Cornfoot	Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd
Michael Jachacy	Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd
Grant Moir	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Chris Donald	NatureScot
Andrew Saunders	Scottish Ski Club
Euan Baxter	Snowsport Scotland
Chris Taylor	VisitScotland
Moira Langmuir	Scottish Ski Club
Dave Macleod	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
James Gibbs	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Douglas Cowan	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Elaine Hanton	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Sandra Dunbar	Highlands and Islands Enterprise

1	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>
	<p>Alistair Dodds welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the change from in-person to Teams was to enable more members to join the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Bill Lobban, Rachel Davies, Karren Derrick, David Frew, Laura McNally, Peter Long, Davie Black, Johnnie Grant, Shaun Roberts, Ruari Watt and Lesley McKenna, Elspeth Byrne, Malcolm Macleod and Duncan Swarbrick (with Janis Bootle attending on his behalf).</p>
2	<b>Approve previous note/actions/matters arising</b>
	<p>The previous meeting note was approved.</p> <p><b>Previous actions:</b></p> <p>The following actions since the last meeting were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CMSL and Snowsport Scotland had met,</li> <li>- PR material for opening of funicular still to be developed but will comments of members will be taken into account.</li> <li>- Stakeholder engagement in relation to masterplan has started and will continue as projects are developed.</li> </ul> <p>Finally, it was noted that CNPA would update members on the active travel project at this meeting.</p> <p><b>Matters arising:</b></p> <p>Dave Macleod gave a brief update on the funicular reinstatement works, including the remaining design works, plans for remobilisation onto site in mid-April subject to weather and programming of the control system replacement to follow completion of the strengthening works (with as much being undertaken in parallel). Works are still scheduled to complete in Autumn. Finally, he noted that the Safety Case work stream has been underway for quite some time and is a significant work stream in its own right. Once all works are complete, Department for Transport approval of the Safety Case will be required before the funicular can return to operations. We are aiming to reopen during winter 22/23.</p> <p>Susan Smith updated members on current activities at the resort. She noted how challenging the winter has been with natural snow only arriving during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of February. This has resulted in a reliance on the beginner area slope which has a maximum capacity of c.150. To date, only 12k skier days had been recorded and the resort has been closed for 15 days due to poor weather. She also noted that the weather forecast does to show any significant snow fall. Planning is currently on a day-to-day basis and the focus is on trying to ensure access can be maintained to the upper slopes on which there is still good snow cover. CMSL hope to remain open for snowsports until end April but that is entirely weather dependent.</p>
3	<b>CNPA – Glenmore Active Travel</b>

	<p>Grant Moir updated the group on progress, noting that the project is currently in the development phase which will run until March 2023. At that point, CNPA will submit a Delivery Plan for a planned start in September 2023. A first meeting with stakeholders is planned for 21 March. The project will consider long term transport impacts during the winter and summer, demand responsiveness and accessibility. The project fits with national priorities, including the move to net zero and transport policies. Ultimate objective is to create a sustainable transport service which works long term and isn't reliant on public funds.</p> <p>Janis Bootle advised that the AGCT Board were considering a sustainable bus project for Glenmore during the summer months. Grant Moir noted the importance of joining up efforts.</p>
5	<p><b>CMSL – Mountain Biking at Cairngorm</b></p>
	<p>Michael Jachacy gave an overview of the proposed mountain biking project at Cairngorm, noting that the project was the first to come out of the Cairngorm Masterplan and had been developed in close consultation with Section 50 consultees and Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland. A description of the various trails, uplift and bike hire was given and visuals shared with the group. It was noted that the project is currently subject to a planning application.</p> <p>Euan Baxter welcomed the progress being made and particularly the continuing focus on the family market.</p>
6	<p><b>Operating and Governance Update</b></p>
	<p>Elaine Hanton updated the group on the progress made to date, key lessons coming out the various discussions with interested parties, and the need to now consider the options for long term ownership and operating models. She shared a list of suggested options for each and draft criteria against which these could be assessed. Immediate views were sought from the group, but members were also asked if they would be willing to meet separately with HIE to share views, including on whether these were indeed the right options to consider. It was noted that HIE would not jump to any conclusions and was also not looking to make any immediate changes, the focus for now being on stabilising the operating company and securing early essential investments. Alistair Dodds emphasised that HIE genuinely wishes to hear the views of stakeholders.</p> <p>Grant Moir noted that it was difficult to see how anything other ongoing public sector ownership could work and cautioned against a model which sought to run the resort as a purely commercial entity. He also suggested that alongside ownership, governance options could be considered.</p> <p>Euan Baxter and Mark Tate both noted that they would like to follow up separately with HIE on this.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Members to advise HIE if they wish to discuss this further.</li> </ul>

7	<b>Any other business</b>
	<p>Dave Macleod provided an update on Masterplan delivery, including early scoping for the Day Lodge replacement – HIE will engage with stakeholders to assess whether there is interest from the community, business, sport, education and research sectors in space within a new building as well as facilities that can be used for events/training etc. Dave stressed that this would have to be complementary to what’s available elsewhere. He also updated members on design work for an improved sense of arrival at Cairngorm and car park upgrade. Finally, he advised that the next phase of SSEN works to replace the ring main will involve replacement of the cable between the Shieling and Day Lodge this year.</p> <p>Chris Donald asked for a further discussion with HIE/CMSL on ecological restoration plans across the Estate. It was agreed that CNPA should also be involved in that.</p> <p>Janis Bootle asked if CMSL plan to keep the Shieling open over the Easter period. Susan Smith confirmed that is the intention.</p> <p>Alistair Dodds suggested mid-June for the next meeting of the group and asked members to consider whether they would prefer another virtual meeting or to meet in-person.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIE/CMSL to meet with CNPA and Nature Scot on ecological matters.</li> <li>• Members to advise HIE of their preference for future meetings (virtual or in-person).</li> </ul> <p>The meeting closed at 15.15.</p> <p>Date of next meeting: to be agreed.</p>